The Anapanasati Sutta

A Practical Guide To Mindfulness of Breathing and Tranquil Wisdom Meditation

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About the Author

Bhante Vimalaramsi became a Buddhist monk in 1986 because of his keen interest in meditation. He went to Burma in 1988 to practice intensive mediation at the famous meditation center, Mahasi Yeiktha in Rangoon. There he practiced meditation for 20 to 22 hours a day for almost a year, then because of some social unrest, all foreigners were asked to leave the country, so Bhante went to Malaysia and practiced intensive Loving-kindness meditation for 6 months.

In 1990, Bhante went back to Burma for more intensive *Vipassana* meditation, for 16 hours a day, at Chanmyay Yeiktha in Rangoon. He practiced for 2 years, sometimes sitting in meditation for as long as 7 to 8 hours a sitting. After two years of intensive meditation and experiencing what they said was the final result, he became very disillusioned with the Vipassana method and left Burma to continue his search. He went back to Malaysia and began teaching loving-kindness meditation.

In 1996, Bhante was invited to live and teach at the largest Theravadan monastery in Malaysia. This Srilankan monastery offered public talks every Friday evening and Sunday morning where 300 to 500 people would attend. Bhante gave talks every other Friday and on every Sunday. While staying there he had the opportunity to meet many learned monks, and Bhante questioned them at length about the Buddha's teachings. He found out that the Vipassana method of meditation is taken from a commentary written a thousand years after the Buddha's death. This commentary is not very accurate when compared with the original teachings.

Bhante Vimalaramsi then began to study the original texts and then practice meditation according to these texts after a three month self-retreat, he came back to Malaysia and wrote this book on the Mindfulness of Breathing called "The Anapanasati Sutta-A Practical Guide to Mindfulness of Breathing and Tranquil Wisdom meditation." This book has been published by

several publisher and there are 100,000 copies distributed worldwide. This book is currently used as a practical study guide for meditation teachers and their students.

Bhante Vimalaramsi came back to the U.S. in 1998 and has been teaching meditation throughout the country since then. He is presently working to establish a meditation school named *Dhamma Sukha* near Lesterville, Missouri.

Introduction to the Anapanasati Sutta

This book may possibly be stirring up a hornet's nest of indignation and criticism because it gives ideas which go against a unilateral belief that the Lord Buddha taught two separate types of meditation techniques, that is, "Concentration meditation" and "Vipassana Meditation." This unilateral belief which really means a "one-sided" belief is called "Ekamso-vada" in Pali. It is to take a one-sided stand and maintain that one's own opinion or view is correct and all other views are wrong. The Lord Buddha advised his disciples to be flexible and not to be angry if someone gives a new or different kind of understanding to his teachings. He taught his true disciples to listen closely to what is being presented, then compare it with what is being taught in the suttas–to see if it is correct or not. The key word here is suttas (not commentaries or sub-commentaries). This admonishment about not getting angry saves his true disciples from polluting their own minds. And in the process of being angry, they would not be able to determine whether the criticism was fair or not.

In the same way, this book is offered as a clarification of the teachings of the Lord Buddha's method in practicing meditation. If one holds on to a unilateral belief that "Their way is the only way" to practice meditation, without honestly investigating what is being presented in the suttas, then they may possibly be lead astray. Even the best of intentions can cause one to go away from the Buddha's teachings, if those teachings are not occasionally questioned, investigated and compared with the suttas.

The Lord Buddha illustrated the futility and absurdity of unilateral belief and thinking by this story:

Once upon a time, there was a king who, wishing to amuse himself, ordered the Royal Elephant to be brought before him. He also ordered some

blind men, blind from birth, to be brought near the elephant. He then asked these blind men to touch the elephant and gave a description of the elephant to him.

The man who touched the tail said the elephant was like a broom. The one who touched a leg said it was like a tree. The one who touched the body said it was like a wall. The one who touched the ear said the elephant was like a winnowing fan. Thus, each described the elephant differently, but each was sure that his own version was the true description of the elephant. They did not realize that each one touched only a part of the elephant. Each blind person had only a one-sided truth. They started arguing with each other, each sticking to his own point of view. The argument ended up in quarreling and fighting. The king and his ministers rolled with laughter as the blind men continued to quarrel and fight with each other.

The Lord Buddha pointed out that meditators, as well as philosophers dispute and quarrel with each other because similarly, they see only one-side of the truth, or have only one way of looking at things. They dogmatically cling to their views, maintaining that they alone have a monopoly of that truth. All of the Buddhas consider and see all sides of the truth. That is why the suttas are so much more important than the commentaries. Although the comments made about a sutta may be helpful, it is absolutely necessary to check what the commentary says against the original sayings of the Buddha.

This proves that genuine Buddhism is in no way be called unilateral. According to this Buddhist way of thinking, experience is multi-faceted and the Buddhist view is therefore multilateral. If truth is multi-faceted, it cannot be stated in a unilateral way!

This is why the Buddha said, "I do not dispute with the world, though the world disputes with me. No one who is aware of the whole truth can dispute with this world." When a person asked the Lord Buddha for his view, he replied that his view was that he did not oppose anyone in the world, whether human, divine or diabolical. If this is the Buddhist position, how can Buddhist meditators come in conflict with each other, or for that matter, with anyone in the world?

When meditation practitioners become dogmatic, they cease looking for Truth (Dhamma) because dogmatism separates all people, including those who seek to open and purify their minds. This definitely causes conflict and verbal daggers to be thrown. Meditation and mental purification is supposed to teach us love, compassion and tolerance. If this is so, how can dogmatism prevail in the name of Truth?

The Buddhist position cannot be understood if one is attached to preconceived notions like, “This is the Only Way.” This was why the Lord Buddha opened his teachings with the words, “Open, is the Door to Deathlessness. May those who have little dust in their eyes see clearly, so that they can let go of blind faith.” This idea is illustrated in a Zen Buddhist story:

Once, a professor went to a Zen Master. He asked him to explain the meaning of Zen. The Master quietly poured a cup of tea. The cup was full but he continued to pour. The professor could not stand this any longer, so he questioned the Master impatiently, “Why do you keep pouring when the cup is full?” “I want to point out to you,” the Master said, “that you are similarly attempting to understand Zen while your mind is full. First, empty your mind of preconceptions before you attempt to understand Zen.”

Please enjoy reading this book with a mind that is open and free from preconceptions.

An Open Invitation

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambudhasa

Many people are now on a spiritual search for a path that leads their mind to peace and openness. They discovered that the norms of the world which emphasize material happiness, do not actually bring real peace and security. Instead, it leads to more pain and dissatisfaction. To these people, the Lord Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path exemplifies a simple and contented life. A life that is open and free. He taught the methods to free our minds of lust, hatred and delusion and started by showing his disciples how to have an open mind that expands beyond its present limitations so that one can examine with understanding. In the Kalama Sutta, the Lord Buddha explicitly stated that one should always examine and investigate and not follow any beliefs blindly. All of these admonishments were for the purpose of opening and expanding one's experience so that they will not be attached to any particular doctrine without thorough investigation.

This kind of honest inquiry into any particular doctrine opens one's minds and expands their consciousness. Then, they can see what leads to a close or tight mind and what leads to a mind which is open and clear. One of the many lessons which the Lord Buddha taught is to first, expand our consciousness by the practice of generosity (dana). When a person is miserly, they have a tendency to have a tight and limited mind. Their mind holds on to material things and easily becomes attached to them. Attachment of any form makes the mind uncomfortable and tensed. This tension is the cause of immeasurable pain and suffering (dukkha). Thus, by encouraging the practice of generosity, it teaches one how to have a joyful, open and clear mind, which is never closed or tight. Another form of generosity is the giving of

time and energy to help those who are having problems, i.e. to become real friends. This includes helping others to be happy! When one says or performs actions which cause people to smile, it opens one's mind and then joy arises, not only to the other person but in their own mind as well. This type of practice helps one to expand their mind and let go of the tension.

The Lord Buddha also emphasized the importance of keeping one's moral disciplines (sila). There are five moral precepts which release the mind from remorse, anxiety and guilty feelings, when they are continually kept and observed. These precepts are abstaining from killing living beings, abstaining from taking what is not given, abstaining from wrong sexual activities, abstaining from telling lies, and abstaining from taking drugs and alcohol. One's mind will be tension-free when they keep these simple rules of conduct continually.

Subsequently, the Lord Buddha taught the methods of meditation (bhavana) or mental development to free the mind from tension. The essence of meditation is to open and calm one's mind and accept whatever that arises without any tightening at all. And thus, this book of instructions is written for those who are on this noble quest. To a beginner, these instructions may appear confusing and difficult to understand but, one will gradually discover the many benefits when these instructions are followed closely.

In actual fact, meditation, as taught by the Lord Buddha, is never broken into different types, as is commonly practiced today. It is never deep concentration in any of its forms, that is, fixed or absorption concentration (appana samadhi), access or neighborhood concentration (upacara samadhi) or moment-to-moment concentration (khanika samadhi) –which actually brings tightness to the mind and suppresses the hindrances. The 'concentration' meditation is a form of suppression, a kind of cutting off at one's experience which causes a kind of resistance to arise in one's mind. As a result, there is a conflict with reality. On the other hand, "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation" opens one's mind and is continually expanding it, which does not ever exclude or resist anything. A 'concentrated' mind does not meditate in the Buddhist way. It doesn't matter whether one is talking about full or fixed absorption concentration, or access concentration. It is still the same.

The important rule of the meditation is, no matter what distracts one's mind away from the breath and tranquilizing one's mind, they simply open, expand, let it go without thinking about the distraction, relax the mind and tightness in the head, feel the mind open and relax away the tension, and softly redirect one's attention back to the object of meditation i.e., the breath

and relaxing. The act of calming the mind and relaxing the tightness in the head before coming back to the breath makes a huge difference between "Concentration Meditation" and "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation". A meditator who practices "Concentration Meditation" over-focuses on the object of meditation and thus, they have the tendency to close or tighten the mind until there are no more distractions. This practice leads to deep absorption of mind where hindrances are blocked. On the other hand, "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation" has the tendency to open one's mind and to allow the mind to become calm naturally. One does not suppress or force their mind to stay focused on the object of meditation. Instead, the mind is always aware of what it is doing in the present moment. Whenever any distraction arises, one lets go, opens, expands and relaxes the tightness in the head before coming back to the breath and calming the mind. Thus, as described in the sutta, "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation" leads to wisdom, full awareness, sharp mindfulness and eventually to the highest goal of attaining nibbana.

The in-breath, the out-breath, the relaxing of the tightness in the head and the opening and expanding of one's mind, is one's home base. This means that whenever the mind goes away from home, they first let go, relax the tightness again, feel the mind expand and become calm, then redirect the attention back to the breath and calming the mind. One "*Always Comes Back Home* " regardless whether it is a wandering thought, an emotional pain, a physical sensation or any other distraction. They are all treated in the same way! This is by far the easiest meditation instructions that the Lord Buddha ever gave. Simply let go, relax the tightness in the head, feel the mind expand and become tranquil, redirect the attention back to the breath, on the in-breath relax the tightness in the head and calm the mind, on the out-breath relax the tightness in the head and calm the mind. Easy! Do not try to control the breath. Just breathe normally and naturally. That's it in a nutshell. The rest of the book describes these instructions, but with more precise explanations. As one examines and explores the meanings in this book, they will begin to understand and gradually apply this technique in their meditation sittings as well as during their daily activities. At the same time, one will marvel at the beauty and simplicity of the Lord Buddha's "Mindfulness of Breathing" (Anapanasati).

May all who read this book find it helpful and may they reach the highest goal.

Of Rose-apples, Bodhis and the Way to Nibbana

In recent years, there have been many expositions of the Lord Buddha's teachings in English and other languages. However, a great number of them lack authenticity and do not accurately represent the Buddha's words. Many are written in such a free-lance way that it is difficult to even recognize these writings as Buddha-Dhamma. Thus, the purpose of these pages is to draw attention to the far reaching significance of the Lord Buddha's Dhamma, which includes the meditation instructions,[1] and the initial guidance to an understanding of his teachings and their practical applications. This book attempts to give an accurate description of meditation based on the Anapanasati Sutta (which instructions are *exactly the same,* letter for letter and word for word, as the Satipatthana Sutta and the Maharahulavada Sutta, sutta number 62. Both are from the Majjhima Nikaya.), with only limited use of standard commentaries. It is selected from the Middle Length Sayings translated from Pali by the Venerable Nanamoli and Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi.

We will first start with redefining some words which are regularly misunderstood (or badly used to suit some commentaries), misused and are causing a lot of confusion to the practice of the Lord Buddha's method of meditation. Firstly, let us look at the word *jhana.* In Pali, jhana has many types of meanings. It can mean meditation stages or illumination. However, when the common translation of the word jhana as being merely "concentration" is used, misunderstanding takes place. Thus, the author will explain its meaning whenever it occurs in this book. The author also observed that the word jhana was never defined as "fixed concentration, access concentration or mo-

[1]The author refers to the Anapanasati Sutta, which includes the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, as well as the Seven Enlightenment Factors.

mentary concentration" in the suttas. These definitions are only mentioned in some commentaries.

The Lord Buddha invariably includes the word jhanas (meaning 'meditation stages', not fixed absorption of mind) in the full gradual training. According to the suttas, these meditation stages are not mystical or magical experiences. They are simply stages to be recognized by the meditator. These meditation stages (jhanas) contribute to the build-in perfection of the path which emphasizes deep tranquillity, wisdom, stillness and opening of the mind. These qualities provide a solid base for the realization of both calmness of mind and the development of wisdom. While they are still mundane, the jhanas (meditation stages) are the very '**footsteps of the Tathagata** ' that forms the gradual training which leads to nibbana.

Next is the Pali word *samatha.* The more accurate meanings of samatha are peacefulness, calmness, tranquility, serenity or stillness and not as the commonly translated terms like absorption or fixed concentration. Thus, the author prefers to use the word tranquility.

The Pali word *samadhi* is equally important too, as it has many different meanings such as calmness, unified mind, tranquility, peacefulness, stillness, composure of mind, quiet mind, serenity, and one of the lesser meanings, "concentration". Thus, the true meaning is not merely fixed absorption concentration or access concentration, but calmness or stillness in different degrees. Interestingly, Rhys Davids found through his studies, that the word samadhi was never used before the time of the Buddha.[2] Even though as a Bodhisatta, he practiced 'concentration meditation', this word has a different meaning other than concentration. The Lord Buddha "popularized" the word samadhi to express calm wisdom, tranquility, openness, awareness, along with developing a mind which has clarity and wisdom in it. Later, the Hindus changed the meaning to 'concentration'. Hence, the author will use either stillness, or composure of mind, or unified mind. According to the Pali-English dictionary written by Buddhadatta, the prefix *sama* means "calmness or tranquility" and *dhi* means "wisdom". When these two meanings are added together, the word samadhi can actually mean "tranquil wisdom". If one chooses to use the word concentration', they must know that it means stillness of mind or composure of mind, or a unified mind and not absorption, fixed (appana), or access (upacara) concentration or even momentary

[2]See *Thus Have I Heard. The Long Discourses of the Buddha,* translated by Maurice Walshe, Wisdom Publications (1987), p.556.

(Khanika) concentration.

This book is written with a deep conviction that the systematic cultivation of 'Tranquil Wisdom Meditation' *brings both insight* into the seeing of the true nature of this psycho/physical (mind/body) process and *serenity of mind* at the same time! Furthermore, there is the seeing and realizing the cause and effect relationships of all dependent conditions. This means seeing dependent origination which is the development of penetrative wisdom that leads to dispassion, emancipation and enlightenment. As a matter of fact, the Lord Buddha discovered that 'concentration practices' of any kind did not lead him to Nibbana.

After becoming a homeless one, the Bodhisatta went to two different teachers of "concentration meditation". His first teacher was Alara Kalama. After learning the Dhamma and discipline, he practiced until he attained a very high and distinguished stage of meditation called the "realm of nothingness". The Bodhisatta then went to his teacher and asked whether he could proceed any further with that meditation. Alara Kalama replied that it was the highest stage anyone could attained. The Bodhisatta was dissatisfied and went to another teacher by the name of Uddaka Ramaputta. He learned the Dhamma and discipline, then practiced it and attained the "realm of neither-perception nor non-perception". The Bodhisatta again went to his teacher and asked a similar question about there being more to attain. Again, the Bodhisatta was told that this was absolutely the highest attainment anyone could achieve. The future Buddha was disappointed because he saw that there were still many more things to let go of. He observed that these "concentration techniques", which focused intensely on the object of meditation caused tightening in the mind. He reasoned that there was still attachment whenever there was tension in the mind. He also noticed that if any part of the experiences were suppressed or not allowed to arise, (This occurs with every form of 'concentration'–that is, fixed absorption concentration, or access concentration.) there was still some kind of holding on or attachment to an ego belief. Thus, after six long years of trying all of the various spiritual and ascetic practices from body mortifications like starving the body, to holding the breath, he realized that these practices did not lead him to a calm and open mind which was free from attachment and suffering.

On the night of the Bodhisatta's realization of the supreme nibbana, he recalled an incident at a ploughing festival while he was just a young boy of one or two years old. When his attendants left him alone under a rose-apple tree, he sat in "tranquil wisdom meditation" and experienced a mind that

was expanded and opened! He saw that this form of meditation would lead him to the experience of "tranquility jhanas" (as opposed to 'concentration jhanas')[3]. As a result of the "tranquil wisdom meditation", his mind was filled with joy, his body became light and happy. When the joy faded away, he then experienced strong calmness and peacefulness. His mind and body became very comfortable. His mind was very still, composed, with sharp mindfulness and full awareness of what was happening around him i.e., he could still hear sounds and feel sensations with his body, etc., at that time.

When the Bodhisatta sat under the Bodhi tree to meditate on the full moon night of May and made his great effort to attain the supreme nibbana, he recalled that not all forms of pleasure are unwholesome. He realized that there could be pleasurable feelings arising in the mind and body although there was not any attachment to anything. That very night, the Bodhisatta practiced "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation" through the method of opening and expanding the mind. In short, he practiced the "Anapanasati" or "Mindfulness of Breathing". And as we all know, he became the Buddha or the supremely enlightened one.

The Anapanasati Sutta taught by the Lord Buddha 2500 years ago still provides the most simple, direct, thorough, and effective method for training and developing the mind for its daily tasks and problems as well as for its highest aim–the mind's own unshakable deliverance from greed, hatred and delusion. The method described here is taken directly from the sutta itself and its results can be seen clearly and easily when one practices according to the instructions on the sutta. The author would like to emphasize that the instructions in this book are not his "own opinion", but is actually the Lord Buddha's own instruction given in a clear and precise way. It can be called the "Undiluted Dhamma", because it comes directly from the suttas themselves, without a lot of additions or free-lance ideas.

The Anapanasati Sutta gives the **most** profound meditation instructions available today. It includes the "Four Foundations of Mindfulness" and the "Seven Enlightenment Factors" and shows how they are fulfilled through the practice of "Mindfulness of Breathing". This is done by attaining all of the meditation stages (jhanas)[4]. This sutta shows the direct way to practice "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation" and does not categorize meditation practices.

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[3] See Mahasaccaka Sutta, sutta number 36 of Majjhima Nikaya.

[4] This means all nine of them! They are the four material jhanas, the four immaterial jhanas and the cessation of perception and feelings.

Strangely, the current separation into various types of meditation like "fixed absorption concentration , or access concentration" and "momentary concentration" meditation seems to occur only in the commentaries but never in the suttas. Thus, one must notice this and compare them with the suttas for their accuracy.

From the attainment of the fourth jhana, three alternative lines of further development become possible. This sutta deals with only one of those, namely the attainment of all the material and immaterial jhanas (meditation stages), followed by the experience of the cessation of perception and feeling (nirodha samapatti in Pali) and finally the experience of Dependent Origination (Paticcasamuppada). In these attainments, the Lord Buddha mentions four meditative stages that continue the mental unification established by the jhanas (meditation states). These states described as "the liberation that are peaceful and immaterial", are still mundane states. Distinguished from the material jhanas (meditation stages) by their deepening of the subtle mental observations, they are named after their own exalted stages: "the base of infinite space, the base of infinite consciousness, the base of nothingness, the base of neither-perception nor non-perception." These states of consciousness are very attainable if one ardently and continually keeps their daily meditation practice going. As this is a gradual training, one first must learn to walk before they learn how to run. Thus, the beginning of the meditation practice is the basis for further development.

This is a straight and direct path towards liberation and the supramundane nibbana. It does, however, require sustained meditative effort, applied to a simple object of meditation to watch, i.e., the breath, followed by the relaxation and expansion of the mind which allows the mind to become calm and clear without distractions.

When one practices the Anapanasati Sutta as a "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation", they find that their creativity and intuition increase as their practice develops. This forms the timeless and universal appeal of a true 'Doctrine of Enlightenment' (realizing Dependent Origination and the Four Noble Truths) which has the depth and breadth, the simplicity and intelligence for providing the foundation and the framework of a living *Dhamma For All.* One will sense the urgency of the fundamental "non-materialistic" problems and search for solutions that neither science nor the "religions of faith" can provide.

More important is the final realization which comes through the method of "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation" that invokes experiencing the various meditation stages (jhanas) and seeing through direct knowledge, all of the twelve

links of "Dependent Arising". This means seeing and realizing directly the second and third Noble Truths. And when these two Noble Truths have been seen and realized directly, this implies that the First Noble Truth and the Fourth Noble Truth are seen and practiced. This is because one can't see the "Origin of Suffering" without first seeing the "Suffering" itself and suffering would not cease without practicing the way leading to the cessation of suffering. Thus, seeing and realizing Dependent Origination, means that one sees and realizes all of the Four Noble Truths, which is actually the true essence of Buddhist meditation.

The true aim of the Anapanasati Sutta is nothing less than final liberation from suffering which is the highest goal of the Lord Buddha's Teachings–Nibbina. The practice of the Buddhist Path evolves in two distinct stages, a mundane (lokiya) or preparatory stage and a supramundane (lokuttara) or accomplished stage. The mundane path is developed when the disciples undertake the gradual training in developing their virtues (continually keeping the precepts), tranquility or deep composure of mind, and developing wisdom. This reaches its peak in the practice of "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation", which deepens direct experience, and at the same time, shows one the three characteristics of all existence, as well as, all of the Noble Truths.

In short, there are two kinds of nibbina, one is the worldly or mundane type of nibbana and the other is the supramundane or unworldly type of nibbana. The mundane or worldly type of nibbana is attained every time the meditator lets go of an attachment or hindrance and relief arises along with a kind of happiness. This type of nibbana will occur many times when one is seriously practicing "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation'. *The supramundane type of nibbana only occurs* ***after*** *the meditator sees and realizes 'Dependent Origination' (Paticcasamuppada) both forwards and backwards.* (This means realizing the Four Noble Truths.) This supramundane nibbana takes time and effort to achieve. However, that does not mean that it is impossible for laymen and laywomen to attain it. With persistent daily practice and by taking an occasional meditation retreat with a competent teacher who understands how the "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation" works, even those who live active lives in the world can still achieve the highest goal of the Supramundane Nibbana. It was mentioned in the Parinibbana Sutta, that during the time of the Lord Buddha, many more laymen and laywomen became saints than the Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis when they practiced on a regular basis. The common belief that one must be a 'Bhikkhu' or 'Nun' in order to reach this goal is just not true. The exhortation of the Lord Buddha was for all people who were

interested in the correct path to 'Ehipassiko' (a Pali word meaning 'come and see'). This is very good advice because it helps those who are interested, to get out of the judgmental, critical mind and honestly practice to see if this is, in fact, the right way.

Dependent Origination is the teaching which makes the Lord Buddha's path unique among all other types of meditation. During his period of struggle for enlightenment, Dependent Origination came as a marvelous and eye-opening discovery that ended his pursuit in the darkness: *"Arising, arising–thus, Bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, understanding and light".* (Samyutta Nikaya X11. 65/ii.105). Once enlightened, the mission of the Tathagata is to proclaim Dependent Origination (This means the Four Noble Truths.) to the world (Samyutta Nikaya X11.25-6). The Lord Buddha taught this in discourse after discourse, so much so, that the Dependent Origination soon becomes the **most essential and important** teaching of all. When the Arahat Assaji was asked to state the Master's message as precisely and as briefly as possible, he gave the doctrine of arising and ceasing of phenomena. With a single sentence, the Lord Buddha dispels doubt about the correctness of this summary: *"He who sees Dependent Origination sees the Dhamma, he who sees the Dhamma sees Dependent Origination."* (Taken from the Middle Length Sayings [Majjhima Nikaya] Sutta 28 section 38). This means seeing and realizing all of the Noble Truths. **This is the only way!**

When one's faculties have gained a degree of maturity and they see the twelve links of 'Dependent Origination' clearly, the mundane path rises to the supramundane path because it leads directly and surely out of 'Suffering'. One then realize 'The Origin of Suffering', 'The Cessation of Suffering', and 'The Path Leading the Way Out of Suffering'.

There is another interesting sutta about seeing of the Four Noble Truths, found in the Digha Nikaya Sutta number 16, section 5.27. From this section of the sutta, one concludes that the way to attain enlightenment is by following the Eightfold Path and realizing the Noble Truths. It says:

> **5.27] "In whatever Dhamma and Discipline the Noble Eightfold Path is not found, no ascetic is found of the first grade (meaning a sotapanna), second grade (meaning sakadagami), third grade (meaning anagami), or fourth grade (meaning an arahat). But such ascetics can be found, of the first, second, third, and fourth grade in a**

> **Dhamma and Discipline where the Noble Eightfold Path is found. Now, Subhadda, in this Dhamma and Discipline the Noble Eightfold Path is found, and in it are to be found ascetics of the first, second, third and fourth grade. Those other schools are devoid of [true] ascetics; but if in this one the Bhikkhus were to live to perfection, the world would not lack for Arahats.**

The mind opens when it sees and realizes these twelve links of Dependent Origination directly. As a result, the mind becomes dispassionate and free. This is as true now in present times, as it was 2500 years ago. Any teaching that doesn't highlight the necessity of the Dependent Origination as its realization and final goal or destination, isn't teaching the true path. Currently, many people say that seeing impermanence, suffering, and not-self is realizing nibbina. However, one must note that although these characteristics do lead the way to realizing nibbina and are very important to develop, they *don't directly allow one to see the supramundane state of Nibbana.* **The meditator can see, one or all of the three characteristics of existence, i.e., impermanence, suffering and not-self, without directly seeing Dependent Origination, but, when one sees Dependent Origination directly he will always see all of the three characteristics.** According to the first sutta in the Maha Vagga of the Vinaya, it cannot work. any other way.

The Courage to Investigate

Currently, there seems to be some disputes regarding the kinds of meditation the Lord Buddha taught. One school of thought says – “One must begin by practicing ’Jhana [fixed] concentration meditation’ and then proceed to the fourth jhana[5] before switching over to the practice of ’vipassana meditation’ or momentary concentration [khanika sarnadhi]. Other schools of thought say that one can attain Nibbana without going through the jhanas[6], but only practice “vipassana meditation”[7] or developing access concentration [upacara samadhi] right from the beginning of their meditation practice.

Interestingly, the word “vipassana’ or ’vidassana’ (which has the same meaning) is only mentioned very few times in the suttas, whereas the word Jhana (here meaning tranquil wisdom meditation stages, not fixed concentration) is mentioned many thousands of times. Moreover, the Anapanasati Sutta shows that the Lord Buddha taught only one kind of meditation, that is by simultaneously developing both the jhanas and wisdom. (Here, the word jhana means meditation stages or illumination of mind, not deep absorption or fixed concentration (appana samadhi), access concentration (upacara samadhi) or even momentary concentration (Khanika samadhi).) This sutta actually shows the method of how to tranquilize the mind and develop wisdom at the same time by seeing the true nature of existence. This means observing anicca [impermanence], dukkha [suffering], anatta [not-self], along with seeing and realizing the cause and effect relationships of Dependent

[5]Here, the word ’jhana’ carries the meaning of absorption concentration (appana samadhi), or access concentration (upacara samadhi) - This is the stage right before the mind becomes absorbed into the object of meditation. These are the standard definitions as given by the current meditation teachers.

[6]In this context, it only means absorption (appana sarnidhi) and not access concentration (upacara samadhi).

[7]some meditation teachers call this momentary concentration or moment-to-moment concentration (khanika samadhi)

Origination. At the same time, it also fulfills the "Four Foundation of Mindfulness and the Seven Enlightenment Factors". Hence, the way leading to the realization of Supramundane Nibbana is clearly and precisely taught in this wonderful sutta.

The commentaries and sub-commentaries have divided "concentration" and "vipassana" into different forms of meditation. This kind of "separation" does not appear in the suttas. Although it is mentioned in the Anggutara Nikaya that the first part of the practice is samatha and the second part is vidassana (developing wisdom), it is not saying that they are two different types of practices or meditations. The practice is the same! It is only that different things are seen at different times, as in the case of Sutta 111 'One By One as they Occurred' from the Majjhima Nikaya. This sutta gives an explanation of Venerable Sariputta's meditation development and experience of all the jhanas (meditation stages) before he attained arahatship.

When one starts to differentiate and categorize meditation practices, the situation becomes very confusing. This is also evident in the popular commentaries like the Visuddhi Magga and its sub-commentaries. One begins to see inconsistencies when they make a comparison with the suttas. Nowadays, most scholars use just a line or parts of a sutta to ensure that the commentaries agree with the sutta. However, if one were to read the sutta as a whole, the sutta has an entirely different meaning. This is not to say that scholars are intentionally making wrong statements, but sometimes they are caught in looking at such tiny details or parts of the Dhamma with a unilateral view that they tend to lose view of the larger picture of things. The description of the jhanas (here again meaning absorption or fixed on or into the object of meditation, where concentration suppresses the hindrances) in the Visuddhi Magga, doesn't exactly match the description given in the suttas and in most cases, these descriptions are very different!

For example, the Visuddhi Magga talks about having a sign (nimitta in Pali, this can be a light or other visualized mind-made pictures) arise in the mind at certain times when one is practicing jhana meditation (absorption concentration [appana samadhi] or when one gets into access concentration [upacara samadhi] or even in momentary concentration [khanika samadhi]. With each type of 'concentration' a nimitta of some kind arises. When this happens one is practicing a 'concentration' type of meditation practice which the Bodhisatta rejected as being the way to Nibbana! However, if one were to check the suttas, the description of nimittas arising in the mind has never been mentioned. And, if it were very important, it would be

mentioned many times. The Lord Buddha never taught concentration techniques, having nimittas (signs) arising, or the chanting of mantras. These are forms of Hindu practices that have sneaked into Buddhism for a few hundred years. Their influences can be seen in the 'concentration practices' and in the Tibetan Buddhist styles of meditation, as well as, in other popular commentaries like the Visuddhi Magga. Thus, the current ways of practicing "concentration", do not conform to the descriptions given in the suttas.

One must always honestly and openly investigate what is being said and then check it against the suttas. It is best that one does this not with just part of the sutta but the whole sutta itself, because taking out one or two lines from various sections can cause confusion. When one honestly questions what the Lord Buddha's Teachings really are, they will observe that open investigation helps one to see more clearly and thus, questions can be answered rationally. One must always remember that the commentaries and sub-commentaries are the authors' interpretation of what the suttas say and mean. Many times good intentioned monks look for ways to expand their understanding and attempt to help themselves and others with their comments. Then as time goes by, more scholar monks will expound on a certain comment, explaining the different and subtle meanings of some tiny phrases and individual comments. This "dilutes" the true teachings and thus, has the tendency to take one further away from the true meaning and understanding of the suttas. As a result, many puzzling questions arise.

For example: "In the practice of momentary concentration, where does Dependent Origination fit into the scheme of things?" This practice doesn't seem to go hand in hand with the teaching of Dependent Origination. Another question is: "According to the suttas, Right Effort means bringing up zeal, or joyful interest, or enthusiasm (chanda) in the mind. However, some meditation teachers say Right Effort only means "noting". Other puzzling questions that one might asked are, "Which suttas mentioned the terms momentary [Khanika Samadhi], access [Upacara Samadhi], and absorption or fixed concentration [Appana Samadhi]?" and "Which sutta describes 'Insight Knowledges'?" or "Which sutta says that there is no mindfulness while in the jhana meditation stage?". Please note that in the Parinibbana Sutta, the Lord Buddha had requested his disciples to always check against the suttas and not any other texts.

There must come a time when one must stop repeating the words of others, and stop practicing ways of questionable methods, without doing some open and honest investigation of the original teachings of the Lord

Buddha. One must not depend on hearsay, or blind belief in what a teacher says, simply because he is the authority. In the Kalama Sutta, the Lord Buddha gives some very wise advice:

- It is unwise to simply believe what one hears because it has been said over and over again for a long time.
- It is unwise to follow tradition blindly just because it has been practiced in that way for a long time.
- It is unwise to listen to and spread rumors and gossip.
- It is unwise to take anything as being the absolute truth just because it agrees with one's scriptures (this especially means commentaries and sub-commentaries).
- It is unwise to foolishly make assumptions, without investigation.
- It is unwise to abruptly draw a conclusion by what one sees and hears without further investigation.
- It is unwise to go by mere outward appearances or to hold too tightly to any view or idea simply because one is comfortable with it.
- It is unwise to be convinced of anything out of respect and deference to one spiritual teacher (without honest investigation into what is being taught).

‡

We must go beyond opinions, beliefs and dogmatic thinking. In this way, we can rightly reject anything which when accepted, practiced and perfected, leads to more anger, criticism, conceit, pride, greed and delusion. These unwholesome states of mind are universally condemned and are certainly not beneficial to ourselves or to others. They are to be avoided whenever possible.

‡

On the other hand, we can rightly accept anything which when practiced and perfected, leads to unconditional love, contentment and gentle wisdom. These things allow us to develop a happy, tranquil, and peaceful mind.

Thus, the wise praise all kinds of unconditional love (loving acceptance of the present moment), tranquility, contentment and gentle wisdom and encourages everyone to practice these good qualities as much as possible.

‡

In the Parinibbana Sutta, the Lord Buddha's advice to the Bhikkhus is very plain and precise. One is to practice according to the scriptural texts and observe whether the practice is done correctly. Only after close examination and practice, along with experience, can one be sure that the scriptures are correct. Thus, the Lord Buddha's advice to the Bhikkhus is not only to use the suttas, but also to check whether the suttas are correct according to the Dhamma and the Discipline. This is how one makes sure that the information is true and can then be practiced correctly. This is taken from Sutta number 16, section 4.7 to 4.11 of the Digha Nikaya translated from the book "Thus Have I Heard" by Maurice Walsh. It says:

> ***4.7] At Bhogangagara the Lord stayed at the Ananda Shrine. And here he said to the monks: "Bhikkhus, I will teach you four criteria. Listen, pay close attention, and I Will speak.' 'Yes, Lord,' replied the Bhikkhus.***
>
> ***4.8] "Suppose a Bhikkhu were to say: 'Friends, I heard and received this from the Lord's own lips: this is the Dhamma, this is the Discipline, this is the Master's teaching', then Bhikkhus, you should neither approve nor disapprove his words. Then, without approving or disapproving his words and expressions should be carefully noted and compared with the Suttas and reviewed in the light of the Discipline. If they, on such comparison and review, are found not to conform to the Suttas and the Discipline, the conclusion must be: "Assuredly this is not the word of the Lord Buddha, it has been wrongly understood by this monk; and the matter is to be rejected. But inhere on such comparison and review they are found to conform to the Suttas and the Discipline, the conclusion must be: "Assuredly this is the word of the Lord Buddha, it has been rightly understood by this Bhikkhu." This is the first criterion.***

4.9] "Suppose a Bhikkhu were to say: "In such and such a place there is a community with elders and distinguished teachers. I have heard and received this from that community'; then, monks you should neither approve nor disapprove his words. Then, without approving or disapproving, his words and expressions should be carefully noted and compared with the Suttas and reviewed in the light of the Discipline. If they, on such comparison and review, are found not to conform to the Suttas and Discipline, the conclusion must be: "Assuredly this is not the word of the Lord Buddha, it has been wrongly understood by this monk'; and the matter is to be rejected. But where on such comparison and review they are found to conform to the Suttas and the Discipline, the conclusion must be: "Assuredly this is the word of the Lord Buddha, it has been rightly understood by this monk." That is the second criterion.

4.10] "Suppose a monk were to say: "In such and such a place there are many elders who are learned, bearers of the tradition, who know the Dhamma, the Discipline, the code of rules : I have heard and received this from those Bhikkhus, . . . this is the Dhamma, this is the Discipline, this is the Master's teaching", then, Bhikkhus, you should neither approve nor disapprove his words. Then, without approving or disapproving, his words and expressions should be carefully noted and compared with the Suttas and reviewed in the light of the Discipline. If they, on such comparison and review, are found not to conform to the Suttas and the Discipline, the conclusion must be: "Assuredly this is not the word of the Lord Buddha, it has been wrongly understood by this monk", and the matter is to be rejected. But where such comparison and review they are found to conform to the Suttas and the Discipline, the conclusion must be: "Assuredly this is the word of the Lord Buddha, it has been rightly understood by the monk." This is the third criterion.

> ***4.11] "Suppose a Bhikkhu were to say: "In such and such a place there is one elder who is learned . . . I have heard and received this from that elder . . . this is the Dhamma, this is the Discipline, this is the Master's teaching, then, Bhikkhus, you should neither approve nor disapprove his words. Then, without approving or disapproving his words and expressions should be carefully noted and compared with the Suttas and be reviewed in the light of the Discipline. If they, on such comparison and review, are found not to conform to the Suttas and the Discipline, the conclusion must be: "Assuredly this is not the word of the Lord Buddha, it has been wrongly understood by this Bhikkhu; and the matter is to be rejected. But where such comparison and review they are found to conform to the Suttas and the Discipline, the conclusion must be. "Assuredly this is the word of the Lord Buddha, it has been rightly understood by the Bhikkhu." This is the fourth criterion.***

The spirit of open investigation and exploration into the ways and means of the Lord Buddha's Middle Path, is open to all who have an inquiring mind. This means a mind which is not stuck in looking at things through pride and attachment at what they "think" is right without first checking with the suttas[8]. Occasionally, some meditators become very attached to their opinions and teachers such that they think their method is the "only way", without checking the true teachings from the suttas. As this book is taken directly from the sutta, one can observe how things can be confused and misrepresented by some commentaries and sub-commentaries. If one has the courage to investigate and practice, they will be pleasantly surprised at the simplicity and clarity of the Lord Buddha's teaching, especially when commentaries like the Visuddhi Magga are left alone. Although the suttas appear dry and repetitive, they are quite illuminating and can be fun to read, especially when one practices the meditation and gains intellectual knowledge at the same time.

[8]Notice the plural form of the word sutta – this means seeing the agreement many times.

Prelude to Tranquil Wisdom (Samadhi) Meditation

Before one starts with their meditation, it is very important to build a strong foundation of morality (sila). If the meditator doesn't even practice the five precepts, they will lose interest and finally stop meditating, because they think that the technique is incorrect. Actually the Lord Buddha's technique works very well. The meditator is just not doing the complete practice nor is one doing it in the correct way. Keeping the precepts is essential to the development and purity of the mind. If one breaks any of these precepts, they will experience a lot of restlessness, remorse, and anxiety due to their guilty feelings. This causes the mind to be tight and clouds one's thoughts.

These precepts are absolutely necessary for any spiritual attainments. They provide the mind with general mindfulness and awareness which helps one to have a peaceful mind that is clear from any remorse due to wrong doing. A peaceful and calm mind, is a mind that is tension-free and clear. Thus, it is a very good idea to take these precepts everyday, not as some form of rite or ritual, but as a reminder for one's practice. Taking the precepts everyday helps to keep one's mind, speech and actions uplifted. There are people who recite these precepts in the Pali language. However, it can turn into an empty exercise if the meditator doesn't completely understand Pali. For the earnest meditator it is best to recite these precepts daily in a language that one understands so that the meanings are clear without a doubt. These precepts are:

1. I undertake to keep the precept to abstain from killing living beings

   This precept includes non-killing of beings like ants, mosquitoes, and cockroaches.

2. I undertake to keep the precept to abstain from taking what is not

given

This covers any forms of stealing which even includes taking a pencil from work without permission or using equipment like copy machines for personal use.

3. I undertake to keep the precept to abstain from wrong sexual activity.

   Basically, it means not having any sexual activity with and another person's partner, or having sexual activity with someone that is still under the care of a family member. It also means that one must follow the sexual laws of the land . Any sexual activity that causes undue pain to another being will cause one to have remorse and guilty feelings to arise.

4. I undertake to keep the precept to abstain from telling lies, using harsh speech, slandering others, and speaking gossip or nonsense talk.

   This means abstinence from any type of speech which is not true or helpful to others. It also includes abstinence from telling white lies.

5. I undertake to keep the precept to abstain from taking drugs and alcohol which dulls the mind.

   Many people think that drinking one glass of beer or one social glass of wine would not effect their mind. But this is not true! If one is practicing meditation, they become very sensitive and will notice the effects of even taking something as harmless as aspirin. It can dull one's mind for a whole day. How much more with alcohol and other drugs! However, when one is sick and the doctor says that they must take a certain drug as medicine, then please take the medicine. This precept refers to taking drugs or alcohol in order to relax and escape from the stress of the day.

As soon as one realize that they have broken a precept, one should first forgive themselves and acknowledge that they are not perfect. This helps one to free their mind a little. One then retakes the precepts as soon as possible and make a determination not to break the precepts again. Taking the precepts again will help to re-purify the mind. Over a period of time, one will become more aware and naturally abstain from breaking them due to realization of its harmful effects.

Please practice only one meditation technique at a time because the mind will becomes confused if one tries to mix and match various meditation. Mixing and matching only stops one's progress. The best way is to pick only one teacher who truly understands the meditation. The way to select a good teacher is by observing if their students are kind, pleasant, friendly and supportive. Then, stay with that teacher for a period of time and see for oneself whether their mind becomes more happy and peaceful all of the time, not just while meditating, but in daily life as well. This is ultimately the best way to choose. Does one's awareness of mind states become clearer and easier to recognize then let go of them during one's daily activities as well as during the sitting practice? Otherwise, check with the teacher and the suttas to see if what is being taught agrees with them. As one's practice deepens and the meditation becomes better, the suttas become clearer and easier to understand. This always happens when the teacher is using the suttas as his guide.

Lastly, it is very important for the meditator to recognize whenever the five hindrances arise. They are lust or greed, hatred or aversion, sloth and torpor or sleepiness and dullness, restlessness or remorse, anxiety or scatteredness and doubt. A hindrance is an obstacle or a distraction because it completely blocks one from practicing meditation either while sifting or in their daily activities or seeing things in the present moment clearly. It also causes one to take an impersonal process, personally. Whenever these hindrances arise, one identifies with them very strongly and takes them personally i.e., "I am sleepy, I am restless, I like and I want, I dislike and I hate, I have doubt". These hindrances completely clouds their mind and stops one from seeing clearly whatever happens in the present moment due to the ego involvement of "I am that".

When one is practicing "fixed concentration' the meditator lets go of any distraction and then redirects their mind back to the meditation object again. On the other hand, when one is practicing "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation", one lets go of the distraction (this part is exactly the same as the 'fixed concentration'), relaxes the tightness in the head and feels the mind becomes open, expanded and calm. Only then does one redirect their attention back to the object of meditation. The small difference of relaxing the mind and feeling it open and calm, changes the whole meditation from a 'fixed concentration' to a more flowing, mindful and calm kind of awareness, that doesn't go as deep as the absorption types of meditation. As a result, the meditator becomes more in tune with the teachings in the suttas.

When one is practicing "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation", they do not suppress anything. Suppression means to push down or to push away or not allow certain types of experience i.e., it stops the hindrances from arising. Instead, when a hindrance arises, one must work to open their minds by seeing it clearly as anicca (impermanence, it wasn't there and now it is), dukkha (suffering or unsatisfactoriness, one sees that when these distractions arise they are painful), and anatta (not taking it personally, seeing the hindrances in the true way as being an impersonal process that one has no control over and not taking these hindrances as "I am that"). One then lets go of this obstruction, relaxes the tightness in the head, calms the mind and finally, redirects the attention back to the practice of 'Mindfulness of Breathing'.

As a result, one begins to see clearly how the mind works and this leads to the development of wisdom. When one allows and does not identify with these hindrances, they will naturally fade away, and the mind becomes more clear and bright. Every time one lets go of the ego attachment of "I am that", the mind naturally becomes more expanded, alert and mindful. Thus, one of the main reasons of this book is to show that whenever one suppresses any thing, they are not purifying the mind, or experiencing things as they truly are. At the time of suppression, one is pushing away or not allowing part of their experience and thus, this contracts the mind instead of expanding and opening the mind. As a result, it is not purifying the mind of ignorance. One is actually stopping the process of purification of the mind! It is impossible to experience the unconditioned state of the Supramundane Nibbana when one does not let go of everything that arises, and in that way, purify the mind of the ego belief of "I am that". The Lord Buddha had never taught suppression of any experience nor did he teach a meditation that causes the mind to fix or to absorb into the meditation object. Remember, he rejected every form of 'concentration meditation' as not being the correct way. Actually, any kinds of pain or emotional upset or physical discomforts and even of death must be accepted with equanimity, full awareness or strong attention and not identifying with it or taking that pain personally.

Real personality change occurs when one opens and expands their mind and let go any kinds of hindrances, pain, suffering and tension even in their daily lives. This means that one opens and expands their awareness so that they observe everything with a silent mind which is free from tightness and all ego-attachment. One gradually leads a happy and calm life without a lot of mind chatter, especially during their daily activities. When one practices "concentration meditation", one will feel very comfortable and happy while

in the deep meditation but when they get out of these exalted stages, their personality remains the same (this means that the hindrances attack them but they do not recognize and open their mind. Thus, they contract their mind and become even more attached!). They might even tend to be prideful and critical! This is because whenever a hindrance arises during the meditation, the meditator lets it go and immediately goes back to the object of meditation again. They do this without calming and relaxing the tightness caused by the distraction. Instead, their mind tends to close or contract and tighten around that experience (while in sitting meditation) until the mind becomes more deeply 'concentrated'. As a result, this suppresses the hindrance. Thus, they have not completely let go of the ego-attachment to that distraction. Their mind is also tight and tense because they are not seeing clearly that they are not opening and allowing, but closing and fighting with that distraction. This explains why nowadays meditators complain that they have huge amounts of tension in their head. Actually, when one truly lets go of any distraction, there will not ever be any tension in the head. As a result of this suppression, there is no real purifying of the mind and thus, personality change does not occur.

Now, we are almost ready for the Anapanasati Sutta. But, before we go into that, let's look at some words which have been changed so that their meanings in the texts become clearer. For instance, the word 'rapture' is replaced by 'joy', and the word 'pleasure' is changed to 'happiness'. In addition, the word 'concentration' is replaced by 'stillness', 'composure of mind', or 'unified mind'. When one practices according to the Lord Buddha's instructions as described here, they will be able to confirm their experiences by reading the suttas. As a result, there is better understanding of these profound texts.

One last note: In these few opening chapters, the author has touched on some controversial views about the practices of absorption or fixed concentration (appana samadhi), access concentration (upacara samadhi) and momentary concentration (khanika samadhi). Thus, the author appreciates very much if the reader finds any mistake, they would indicate the suttas which mentioned these various concentration practices.

When one practice “Tranquil Wisdom Meditation” there is only opening, expanding of the mind and allowing, then relaxing the tightness caused by the hindrance or distraction, before going back to the object of meditation again. This opening and allowing helps one to be more aware and alert to the things which causes pain and suffering so that they can open up and expand

even further. With this kind of awareness, there is personality change and only then can one fulfill the Lord Buddha's admonition of "We are the Happy Ones".

The Anapanasati Sutta

Introductory Section

1] Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Savatthi in the Eastern Park, in the Palace of Migara's Mother, together with many very well-known elder disciples – the Venerable Sariputta, the Venerable Maha-Moggallana, the Venerable Maha Kassapa, the Venerable Maha Kaccana, the Venerable Maha Kotthita, the Venerable Maha Kappina, the Venerable Cunda, the Venerable Anuruddha, the Venerable Revata, the Venerable Ananda, and other very well known elder disciples.

2] Now on that occasion elder Bhikkhus had been teaching and instructing new Bhikkhus; some elder Bhikkhus had been teaching and instructing ten new Bhikkhus, some elder Bhikkhus had been teaching and instructing twenty. . . thirty. . . forty new Bhikkhus. And the new Bhikkhus, taught and instructed by the elder Bhikkhus, had achieved successive stages of high distinction.

3] On that occasion – the Uposatha day of the fifteenth, on the full-moon night of the Pavarana ceremony[9], The Blessed One was seated in the open surrounded by the Sangha of Bhikkhus. Then, surveying the silent Sangha of Bhikkhus, he addressed them thus:

4] "Bhikkhus, I am content with this progress. My mind

[9]This ceremony marks the end of the rains retreat where the Bhikkhus gathered together to confess any slight wrong doing which they many have committed.

is content with this progress. So arouse still more energy to attain the unattained, to achieve the unachieved, to realize the unrealized. I shall wait here at Sivatthi for the Komudi full moon of the fourth month."

The Bhikkhus can still practice their meditation or make new robes and prepare to go out wandering or teaching the Dhamma to other monks and layperson during this extra month. The Kathina Ceremony is also held during this month. This is the time for laymen and laywomen to make extra merit by practicing their generosity by giving robes and other requisites to the Sangha members.

5] The Bhikkhus of the countryside heard: "The Blessed One will wait there at Savatthi for the Komudi full moon of the fourth month." And the Bhikkhus of the countryside left in due course for Savatthi to see the Blessed One.

6] And the elder Bhikkhus still more intensively taught and instructed new Bhikkhus; some elder Bhikkhus taught and instructed ten new Bhikkhus, some elder Bhikkhus taught and instructed twenty. . . thirty. . . forty new Bhikkhus. And the new Bhikkhus, taught and instructed by the elder Bhikkhus, achieved successive stages of high distinction.

7] On that occasion – the Uposatha day of the fifteenth, the full-moon night of the Komudi full moon of the fourth month – the Blessed One was seated in the open surrounded by the Sangha of Bhikkhus. Then, surveying the silent Sangha of Bhikkhus, he addressed them thus:

8] "Bhikkhus, this assembly is free from prattle, this assembly is free from chatter[10]. It consists purely of heartwood. Such is this Sangha of Bhikkhus, such is this assembly. Such an assembly as is worthy of gifts,

[10] This refers to talking and idle gossip. The Bhikkhus waited patiently, and quietly doing their own meditation practices of expanding the silent mind and having clear mindfulness while waiting for the Buddha to speak.

> ***worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation, an incomparable field of merit for the world – Such is this assembly. Such an assembly that a small gift given to it becomes great and a great gift becomes greater – such is this Sangha of Bhikkhus, such is this assembly. Such an assembly as is rare for the world to see – such is this Sangha of Bhikkhus, such is this assembly. Such an assembly as would be worthy journeying many leagues with a travel-bag to see – such is this Sangha of Bhikkhus, such is this assembly.***
>
> ***9] "In this Sangha of Bhikkhus, there are Bhikkhus who are arahats with taints destroyed, who have lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached the true goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and are completely liberated through final knowledge – such Bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of Bhikkhus.***

This is the stage where all of the fetters are destroyed such that they will not even arise anymore. The ten fetters are: 1. Belief in permanent self or soul, 2. doubt in the correct path, 3. Belief that chanting, or rites and rituals lead one to Nibbana, 4. lust or greed, 5. hatred or aversion, 6. greed for fine-material existence or immaterial existence, 7. conceit or pride, 8. sloth and torpor or sleepiness or dullness of mind, 9. restlessness or agitation of mind, 10. ignorance. (In PaIi, they are 1. Sakkayaditthi, 2. Vicikiccha, 3. Silabbataparamasa, 4. Kanasmaraga, 5. Patigha, 6. Ruparaga, Aruparaga, 7. Mana, 8. Middha, 9. Uddhacca, 10. Avijja.) The final stage of Arahatta is described as follows: "They are the ones who have lived the Holy Life, laid down the burden, reached the true goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and are completely liberated through final knowledge, they have done their work with diligence; they are no longer capable of being negligent" (Taken from the Majjhima Nikaya sutta number 70 section 12.)

> ***10] "In this Sangha of Bhikkhus there are Bhikkhus who, with the destruction of the five lower fetters, are due to reappear spontaneously (in the pure abodes) and there attain final Nibbana, without ever returning from that world – such Bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of Bhikkhus.***

This stage of sainthood is called Anagami where lust and hate no longer even arise in one's mind. The five lower fetters have been destroyed but there is still work to be done.

> ***11] "In this Sangha of Bhikkhus there are Bhikkhus who, with the destruction of three fetters and with the attenuation of lust, hate and delusion, are once-returners, returning once to this world to make an end of suffering – such Bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of Bhikkhus.***

This stage of sainthood is called being a Sakadagami or once-returner. They have given up the belief in a permanent self, belief that one can attain enlightenment by chanting and practicing rites and rituals, and they have given up doubt in the path. Also, the person who has attained this stage has tremendously weakened lust and hatred, together with all of the other fetters.

> ***12] "In this Sangha of Bhikkhus there are Bhikkhus who, with the destruction of the three fetters, are stream-enterers, no longer subject to perdition, bound [for deliverance], headed for enlightenment – such Bhikkhus are there in this sangha of Bhikkhus.***

The person who has attained this stage of enlightenment is called a Sotapanna or stream-enterer. They have given up the three lower fetters mentioned above, they are never going to be reborn in a low existence again. Their lowest rebirth will be as a human being, and the most lives that they will experience before attaining final Nibbana, is seven.

> ***13] "In this Sangha of Bhikkhus there are Bhikkhus who abide devoted to the development of the four foundations of mindfulness[11] – such Bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of Bhikkhus. In this Sangha of Bhikkhus there are Bhikkhus who abide devoted to the four right kinds of strivings (efforts). . . of the four bases for spiritual***

[11] This refers to the mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of feelings, mindfulness of consciousness, and mindfulness of mind objects.

> ***power. . . of the five faculties. . . of the five powers. . . of the seven enlightenment factors. . . of the Noble Eightfold Path – such Bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of Bhikkhus***

The four right kinds of strivings, the four bases for spiritual power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven enlightenment factors and the Noble Eightfold Path are described in Mahasakuludayi Sutta, Sutta Number 77, Section 16 of the Majjhima Nikaya as ways to develop wholesome states. (This sutta describes the qualities of Lord Buddha which his disciples honour, respect, revere and venerate him and live in dependence on him.) We will now look into the meanings of these terms. The four Foundations of Mindfulness, the Seven Enlightenment Factors and the Noble Eightfold Path will be discussed later in the sutta.

The Four Right Kinds of Striving

> *"Again Udayin, I have proclaimed to my disciples the way to develop the four right kinds of striving. A Bhikkhu awakens zeal, for the non-arising of unarisen evil unwholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives."*

Besides zeal, the Pali word *chanda* also means joyful interest or enthusiasm. A mind which points towards a wholesome object like joy has this quality of joyful interest. Thus, the first right kind of striving is to cultivate a mind that has joyful interest and enthusiasm so that the mind becomes clear and free from unwholesome states. Joy grows when the mind is smiling and happy during our daily life as well as during meditation. As a result, the mind will be uplifted and wholesome at that time. Nowadays, these four kinds of striving are usually called the four right efforts. Some meditation teachers request the meditator to put out strenuous effort to note what is happening in the present moment. But the sutta here clearly shows that this is not that kind of mindfulness.

The mindfulness of joyful interest and enthusiasm, i.e., having a smiling mind leads to a mind which is light, open, accepting and without any tension. This is the proper definition of right effort and according to the sutta, it actually has nothing to do with noting phenomena until it goes away.

> "He awakens zeal for the abandoning of arisen evil unwholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives."

The second right kind of strivings teaches one to abandon heavy emotional states like anger, sadness, jealousy, anxiety, stress, depression, fear, etc., and replace them with a smiling mind which relaxes away even the subtlest tension. This is the wholesome state of joyful interest and enthusiasm. By cultivating such a smiling mind, one overcomes the ego-identification with these states as being "Mine". A good sense of humor about oneself is a skillful tool to develop when trodding the spiritual path.

> "He awakens zeal for the arising of unarisen wholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives."

This means seeing that the mind brings up joyful interest and enthusiasm when these wholesome states are not in the mind. In other words, the cultivation of mindfulness means cultivating joy and a smiling mind. Even when there is a neutral mind that is merely thinking this and that, this is the time to practice smiling in the mind and experiencing joyful interest and enthusiasm.

> "He awakens zeal for the continuous, non-disappearance, strengthening, increase, and fulfillment by development of arisen wholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. And thereby many disciples of mine abide having reached the consummation and perfection of direct knowledge."

The fourth right kind of striving refers to a continuous practice, not only during the formal practice of meditation but also during the daily activities. At one time the author was approached by some students asking: "How can one attain Nibbana by practicing smiling and having joyful interest?" They thought that they have made a very profound statement because they thought Nibbana is attained by looking at pain and suffering all of the time. These students are not practicing how to be light and happy as taught by the Lord Buddha. The author replied them by asking some cross questions: "How can you get to Nibbana without smiling and having joyful interest in your

mind? Isn't joy one of the enlightenment factors? Didn't the Lord Buddha said 'We are the Happy Ones?"'

Here one can see the importance of developing a mind that smiles and has joyful interest. There arises a true change of perspective in one's mind when they have joyful interest and a smile. One is not so heavy and grumpy when things become difficult. This is because there is not so much ego-attachment and the meditator can see a situation clearly. When the mind do not smile and has no joyful interest, everything becomes heavy and all mental states and thoughts becomes depressing. The mind becomes over serious and takes everything negatively.

For example, let's say that you are very happy and I come along and give you a rose. You might take that rose and admire the color, the shape and the fragrance. You think, "What a beautiful flower! Just seeing it makes me even more happy". But, if you are in a depressing or angry mood and I come along and give you that same rose, your mind would see the thorns instead. You might even think, "Ugh! This rose is so ugly. I hate it!" At that time, all that is seen is the thorns. But, in actual fact, the rose is the same. The only difference is your mood. Joyful interest and smiling helps to make the world around you a better place to live. This, however, is not to say that we won't go through trials and tribulations. We will! However, the perspective of having joy in the mind changes a big problem into a small one.

The Four Bases for Spiritual Power

> *"Again, Udayin, I have proclaimed to my disciples the way to develop the four bases for spiritual power. Here a Bhikkhu develops the basis for spiritual power consisting in composure of mind, due to joy and determined striving."*

The first spiritual power refers to joy. It is as explained above.

> *"He develops the basis for spiritual power consisting of concentration (here meaning stillness) due to energy and determined striving."*

This is the second spiritual power energy. One cannot slack or becomes lazy when they are on the Lord Buddha's Path. It takes a lot of energy to stay on the path especially when one realizes that this is a lifetime practice!

This is talking about the energy that it takes to recognize when one's mind is tight and tense, followed by the energy to let go of the thinking and relax the tightness in the head and mind, before coming back to the breath.

> *"He develops the basis for spiritual power consisting of concentration (here meaning tranquility) due to [purity of] mind and determined striving."*

The third spiritual power refers to the purity of mind which is developed when one stays on the object of meditation as much as possible. Whenever a hindrance arises and knocks one out of the meditation, then they simply allow the hindrance to be, without getting involved with the thinking mind, relax the tightness in the head caused by the hindrance, then gently redirect their attention back to the meditation object i.e., the breath and tranquilizing and expanding the mind. It doesn't matter how many times the mind goes back to that distraction or hindrance. One simply repeats allowing, relaxing and coming back to the breath. This is the method to purify the mind of all defilements and hindrances. Remember, meditation is not about thinking, but expanding one's mind and awareness into the present moment and then going beyond that, to the true expression of loving acceptance. Meditation is the silence when thoughts – with all its images and words has entirely ceased. But meditation is not 'concentration'. 'Concentration' contracts the mind and is a form of exclusion, a type of cutting off, a suppression of hindrances, a resistance. It is also a kind of conflict. A meditative mind can be very still and composed, and yet, not have exclusion or suppression, nor resistance in it. A concentrated mind cannot meditate according to the Buddhist practice.

> *"He develops the basis for spiritual power consisting in concentration (here meaning composure of mind) due to investigation and determined striving."*

The habit of investigating one's experience is a very important aspect of one's spiritual growth. When one is caught by a hindrance, or pain, or any distraction, they must he able to see how the mind reacts to that particular situation. For example, sleepiness arises while one is meditating. The way to overcome sleepiness is by staying more attentively, with joyful interest, on the object of meditation. One must try to see directly how their mind slips back to the sleepiness. In other words, one must put more effort and energy

into the practice. When one notices how the mind first starts to be caught by the hindrance, they will let go of it more quickly and not he caught for too long a time. However, when one is totally caught by the sleepiness, it may take a while to overcome this hindrance, because this is the last thing the mind wants to do! Thus, the mind may 'ping pong' back and forth from the meditation object back to the sleepiness. The more light and joyful interest towards how the mind works, the more quickly one will let go of the hindrance and begin to meditate again.

Similarly, when pain arises, one does not direct the mind into the pain. One can see how the mind has resistance to that sensation only when their attention is pulled to the pain. If one starts to think about the pain, it will get bigger and more intense. Thus, one first lets go of the thinking mind, which verbalizes about these distraction (pain, hindrance, heavy emotion etc.). Next, relaxes the mind and releases the tight mental knot around the sensation, relaxes the tightness in the head, calms the mind and then, redirect one's attention back to the object of meditation. This is done continually until the pain doesn't pull the mind to it again.

This is decidedly different from some other meditations instructions where the meditators put their attention into the middle of the pain and note it as 'pain. . . pain. . . pain'. All the while, they are trying to see its true nature and watch its changes. But pain by nature, is repulsive and thus, the meditators have the tendency to tighten and harden the mind so that they can continue watching the pain. The hardening of the mind is never noted by the meditators, nor is it ever seen clearly whenever it arises. The meditators will eventually develop enough concentration (fixed attention) to be able to overcome the pain. However, this is achieved by repressing and tightening the mind.

One can clearly observe that the spiritual base of investigation of one's experience is to purify the mind by allowing everything that happens in the present moment to he there without trying to fight, control, or even disturb it in any way. Loving-acceptance and patience (which is defined in the English dictionary as meaning non-aversion) of the present moment is the way to attain Nibbana. It is not attained by concentration, tightness, suppression and repression.

The Five Faculties

> *"Again Udayin, I have proclaimed to my disciples the way to develop the five spiritual faculties. Here a Bhikkhu develops the faculty of faith which leads to peace, leads to enlightenment."*

The faculty of faith is also called the faculty of confidence. As one becomes interested in letting go of the pain of living, one's curiosity becomes stronger. And thus, they begin to look for a meditation teacher. If one is fortunate enough to learn from a competent teacher, they will begin to see some slight changes in the way they perceive the world. As one begins to see this through direct practice, their confidence begin to grow. As a result, their enthusiasm towards the practice increases such that one would want to practice more!

> *"He develops the faculty of energy, which leads to peace, leads to enlightenment."*

When one's confidence grows, they will naturally put more energy into their practice. One begins to sit a little longer and the mind becomes a little clearer. For the beginner it is recommended to sit not less than 45 minutes at a time. But when a sitting is good, please stay with that sitting for as long as it lasts. A good sifting might last for one hour or one hour-ten minutes, or longer. It is good to sit for progressively longer periods of time and not worry about becoming attached to the sitting. The only way one becomes attached is by the thinking about and not doing the meditation in the correct manner. There is nothing wrong in sitting for long periods of time as long as one does not hurt themselves physically and they have enough exercise. Sitting for one or two or three hours is fine only when one is ready to sit comfortably for such long hours. If one sits in a same way which causes pain to arise every time, then they are causing themselves unnecessary physical discomfort. This is not a wise thing to do, because the sitting posture should be comfortable. It is alright if the meditator uses a stool or chair, as long as they do not lean on anything. Leaning is good for sleeping and dullness, not meditating!

And thus, the more confidence one has, the more energy they put into their practice. One's enthusiasm will naturally increase too.

> *"He develops the faculty of mindfulness which leads to peace, leads to enlightenment."*

As one's energy improves, their awareness and mindfulness will naturally become stronger. This is a very natural "non-forced" process. Let's take a look at the mind of an ordinary person, a person like you or me. What one finds is a grasshopper mind, a butterfly mind, or one could also say, a mad monkey mind. It is ever-moving, ever-jumping around. It changes its fantasies and impulses every moment. The mind is a prey of stimuli and its own emotional reaction to them. This is actually a reaction that is mostly **re-acting** to conditions the way one always acts when a certain stimuli arises. It is a chain of linked associations, hopes, fears, memories, fantasies, regrets, streaming constantly through the mind, triggered by memories of the outside world. The mind is blindly, never-stopping, never-satisfied in its search for pleasure and satisfaction. It is no wonder that the mind becomes so crazy and filled with unsatisfactoriness and was described as a restless mad monkey swinging from branch to branch in the quest for satisfying fruit through the endless jungle of conditional events.

Thus, when one first begins to meditate, the mind naturally runs all over the place and stays away from the object of meditation for a long time. Sometimes it even takes two or three minutes before one is able to recognize, they then gently let it go, relax the tension in the head, calm the mind and re-direct the attention back to the breath. This is only natural, because the mind is used to running wherever it likes. But as one's practice develops and they are able to recognize and let go more quickly, their mindfulness gradually becomes sharper. The mind might only stay away from the breath for one minute, before recognizing that it is not on the breath. It then lets go, relaxes the mind, and comes back to the breath. At this time the mind begins to stay on the breath for longer periods of time, perhaps, as long as thirty seconds, before it goes off again. However, one is now becoming better at seeing when the mind goes away. Their mindfulness becomes sharper and they are able to recognize what the mind is doing. Thus, when one's confidence becomes better, their energy improves and as a result, the alertness of mind naturally develops.

> *"He develops the faculty of tranquility or stillness, which leads to peace, leads to enlightenment."*

When one's mindfulness of the present moment improves, the mind will naturally stay on the object of meditation for much longer periods of time. Most people would describe this as 'concentration' but this is not an accurate description. The mind is not absorbed into or fixed onto the object

of meditation. Instead, it is very still, relaxed, composed and stays on the breath very well. At this time a strong feeling of joy arises and the body becomes very light and feels like floating. When the joy fades away, a powerful feeling of tranquility, equanimity and comfortableness arises. Due to one's sharp awareness, they do not become involved with these feelings. But if one begins to think or internally verbalize about how nice this state is and how much they like it, they will lose that state and sleepiness very often comes into the mind. This is because one is caught by the attachment to those feelings and slip off without coming back to the breath. Mindfulness fades away when one starts to think or internally verbalize about things and becomes involved in wanting to control these things and thoughts. This also happens when one craves for the experience of joy and tranquility to arise. This desire makes the mind to try too hard and as a result restlessness and dissatisfaction arise These combination of hindrances will stop all spiritual practice from occurring because the wanting for things to be in a particular way makes all the spiritual development fade away. Therefore, one must be more mindful of the thoughts about these pleasant abiding. And thus, as confidence increases, one's energy grows. This improves our mindfulness which enables the composure and stillness of mind to become stronger and lasts longer.

> *"A Bhikkhu develops the faculty of wisdom (or understanding), which leads to peace, leads to enlightenment. And thereby many disciples of mine abide having reached the consummation and perfection of direct knowledge."*

As one's mind becomes more calm and still, they are able to see the true nature of things. This development of wisdom or intelligence is gained by seeing things arise and pass away by themselves. Even while one is sitting in a jhana [a meditation stage] they see how, for instance, joy arises. It is there for a while then fades away. They see how tranquility and happiness arise. They are there for a while and then they fade away. One is able to see the true nature of impermanence, even in the beginning of their practice, by observing thoughts arising and passing away. One observes feelings and emotions arising and passing away. They also notice that these things that arise and pass away are unsatisfactory and these feelings and emotions are a form of suffering, especially when they don't behave in the way one wants them to. When one sees how truly unsatisfactory this process is, they clearly see that it

is an impersonal process. There is no one who can control the appearance and disappearance of these things. Even while in jhana [a meditation stage] one has no real control over the joy arising because joy arises when the conditions are right for it to come up. At the same time, one simply cannot force joy to stay because it will fade away when the conditions are right. And this causes more unsatisfactoriness to arise, because joy is such a nice feeling! Thus, one is able to see the characteristics of existence very clearly, i.e. anicca (impermanence), dukkha (suffering), and not-self (anatta). This is the way to develop wisdom which gradually leads one to the seeing of Dependent Origination both forwards and backwards (that is, seeing and realizing The Four Noble Truths). An interesting observation is that one can see the three characteristics of existence without ever seeing Dependent Origination, but they can never see Dependent Origination without seeing the three characteristics of existence (i.e., impermanence, suffering and not-self nature) at the same time. We will discuss this in more detail at a later time.

The Five Powers

> *"Again Udayin, I have proclaimed to my disciples the way to develop the Five Spiritual Powers. Here a Bhikkhu develops the Power of Faith, which leads to peace, leads to enlightenment."*
> *He develops the Power of Energy, which leads to peace, leads to enlightenment.*
> *He develops the Power of Mindfulness, which leads to peace, leads to enlightenment.*
> *He develops the Power of Stillness, which leads to peace, leads to enlightenment.*
> *He develops the Power of Wisdom, which leads to peace, leads to enlightenment.*
> *And thereby many disciples of mine abide having reached the consummation and perfection of direct knowledge.*

These are the same as the five faculties mentioned above. They are called powers because of their ability to purify the mind and make it wholesome and clean.

We will now continue with the Anapanasati. Sutta.

14] "In this Sangha of Bhikkhus there are Bhikkhus who abide devoted to the development of loving-kindness. . . of compassion. . . of appreciative joy. . . of equanimity. . . of the meditation of foulness. . . of the perception of impermanence - - such Bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of Bhikkhus. In this Sangha of Bhikkhus there are Bhikkhus who abide devoted to the development of mindfulness of breathing.

Loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity are known as the Four "Brahma Viharas" or the Four Boundless states of mind, or the Limitless states of mind. This is because there is no boundary or limitations to one's mind when they are in these meditative states.

The meditation of foulness is suitable for those who have a strong affinity for lust arising in their minds. It is practiced by reflecting on the element and the disgusting nature of one's body parts. For example, when one looks at a beautiful person and thoughts of lust arise, they can imagine how desirable that person would be are if all of their body parts where to be turned inside-out! Will one's mind think, "Oh! what a lovely intestine or liver !" or "Wow! What beautiful bile, pus and phlegm that person has!" How much lust is there in the mind at that time? Thus, this meditation helps people with lustful personality to he more in balance.

The perception of impermanence does not actually refers to sitting down and thinking about how everything changes. (Remember, "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation" is about seeing with a silent and spacious mind.) It is referring to the meditation states of infinite space and infinite consciousness where the mind sees just how fleeting these mental and physical phenomenon truly are.

We will now proceed to the next section of the sutta which speaks about the Mindfulness of Breathing.

Mindfulness of Breathing

15] "Bhikkhus, when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, it is of great fruit and great benefit. When Mindfulness of Breathing is developed and cultivated, it fulfills the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. When the Four Foundations of Mindfulness are developed and cultivated, they fulfill the Seven Enlightenment

> ***Factors. When the Seven Enlightenment Factors are developed and cultivated, they fulfill true knowledge and deliverance.***

One observes that the Four Foundations of Mindfulness is in this sutta and they are fulfilled through the practice of jhana or tranquil and wise meditative states of mind. This is decidedly different from the current theory that one can't attain the Four Foundations of Mindfulness while experiencing jhanas [meditative stages]. The Lord Buddha only taught one kind of meditation and that is samatha or tranquility or one can say he taught samadhi – tranquil 'wisdom meditation.

> ***16] And how, Bhikkhus, is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated, so that it is of great fruit and great benefit?***
>
> ***17] "Here a Bhikkhu, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or an empty hut, sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, set his body erect, and established mindfulness in front of him, ever mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out.***

The phrase "gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or an empty hut" means that one goes to a reasonably quiet place where there will be few distractions. A suitable location will be one that is away from road noises, loud and persistent music or sounds, people as well as animals.

During the time of the Lord Buddha most people sat on floors. Hence, the phrase "sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, set his body erect" But today, sifting on the floor can be a very trying and painful experience as people mostly sit on chairs, stools, or couches. If one wants to sit on floors, it may help if they sit on cushions. In actual fact, it is far more important to observe what is happening in the mind than to sit with uncomfortable or painful sensations. Remember that there is no magic in sitting on the floor. The magic comes from a clear, calm mind that is at ease, as much as possible. Thus, if sitting on the floor is a very painful experience, then it is alright to sit on a stool or a chair. There is however, an extremely important factor if the meditator sits on a chair. They must sit without leaning against the chair. Leaning is good for sleeping but not for meditation! "Set his body erect" means sit with a nicely straight back which is not rigid and uncomfortable.

A nicely straight back has all of the vertebrae stacked one upon another. This is to ensure that energy can flow up and down the back without any blockages. Leaning stops the energy flow and causes sleepiness to arise. Thus, please do not lean against anything. When one first start out, their backs are not used to being straight and some of the muscles can rebel and complain. However, with patience and perseverance, these unused muscles will gradually adjust and strengthen.

There is another important aspect to sitting meditation. One must sit without moving the body for any reason. Please do not wriggle the toes or fingers or move the hands to rub or scratch or change the posture in any way until after the sitting is over. Any movement breaks the continuity of the practice and this causes the meditator to start all over again. Some meditation teachers tell their students that it is quite alright to move as long as they are "mindful". But if the students are truly mindful, they would be able to watch the mind and its dislike of the sensations and then, relax the mind around them. Thus, there would be no reason to move! Mindfulness means to lovingly-accept what is happening in the present moment, without trying to control, resist or change it. To be truly mindful means to open up and allow whatever to present itself in the present moment. Moving while sifting means that the meditator is not being mindful at all. The meditator is giving in to the desire to move, and is identifying with that desire. Thus, when one is ready and begins to meditate, they must remain still and keep tranquilizing the mind whenever there is a distraction. To sit as still as a Buddha image is the best! Actually the only allowable movement during meditation is to straighten the back when it starts to curve or slump, as long as it is not done too often.

The phrase *"establishing mindfulness in front of him"* means that one puts aside all other worldly affairs and involvement with sensual pleasures. One softly closes the eyes and whenever there is a distracting sound, smell, taste or sensation, or thought, they are aware of that and simply let it go. One then relaxes the tightness in the head and redirects the attention back to the object of meditation.

"Ever mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out" tells us the way to practice mindfulness of breathing. Being aware of the breath means to know when one is experiencing the in-breath and to know when one is experiencing the out-breath. It simply means to open up one's awareness and to be attentive to the breath as much as possible and at the same time, relax the tightness in the head (this will be explained more thoroughly in a little

while).

> ***18] "Breathing in long, he understands: 'I breathe in long'; or breathing out long, he understands: 'I breathe out long.' Breathing in short, he understands: 'I breathe in short'; or breathing out short he understands 'I breathe out short'.***

The words **"he understands"** are emphasized to show that one does not focus with strong attention on the breath to the exclusion of everything else. One merely **understands** what the breath is doing in the present moment. That's all there is to this! One simply knows when they breathe in long or short! There is no controlling of the breath at any time. Instead, there is only understanding of what one is doing in the present moment. If one tries to "over-focus" or "concentrate" on the breath to the exclusion of anything else, they will develop a headache due to the "wrong concentration". Whenever a meditator holds tightly onto the meditation object and tries to force the mind to "concentrate" or bumps any distractions away, the head will develop a very tight and painful tension. This tightness or tension on the head also occurs when the meditator attempts to control the sitting by throwing down any distracting thoughts and feelings and quickly rush back to the meditation object. This happens with 'momentary concentration' as well as any other kind of 'concentration' technique.

Many meditation teachers tell their students to put their attention right in the middle of the sensation and see its true nature. This will cause a few different things to occur. Firstly, the students will develop a stronger pain and this becomes a distraction instead. It is because these meditation teachers tell their students to stay with that pain until it goes away. Unfortunately, this can take an unbelievably long time. In addition, the students need to tighten and toughen the mind in order to observe the tension. Actually, this tightening and toughening of the mind is not being mindful. The students begins to develop a mind that hardens itself when pain arises. It is only natural that this happens as it take a lot of courage and fortitude to watch pain in this way. A type of aversion is naturally developed at that time, and this hardening of mind is not being noticed as anicca, dukkha, anatta. Consequently, even when one is not meditating, this suppression can cause personality hardening, and that causes true problems to arise. The mind has a tendency to become critical and judgmental and the personality development

of the meditator becomes hard. Many people say they need to do a loving-kindness retreat after doing other types of meditation because they discovered that they do and say things which are not so nice to other people. When this happens, there appears a question, “Is this really a type of meditation technique which leads to my happiness and to the happiness of others? If the answer is yes, then why do I need to practice another form of meditation to balance my thinking?”

Eventually one is able to suppress this aversion by practicing ’concentration’, which is taught to be the “correct method” by most meditation teachers. But the method taught by the Lord Buddha was to never suppress anything. His method was to open and expand the mind and to allow everything that arises in the present moment. Thus, whenever a pain arises in the body, one first recognizes that the mind has gone to that sensation, lets go of any thoughts about that sensation, opens the mind and lets go of the tight mental fist that is wrapped around the sensation, or by letting the sensation be there by itself without any mental resistance or aversion to it. This is done by telling themselves, “Never mind it is alright for this pain to be there.” Next, relax the tightness which is in the head ..... feel the mind expand and become calm ..... then re-direct the attention back to the object of meditation i.e. the breath.

If one gets caught in the thinking about the sensation or pain, the sensation will get bigger and become more intense. Eventually, they can’t stand it any more and feel that they have to move. This thinking or internally verbalizing about the sensation and wishing it would go away, is the ’ego identification’ with the painful sensation. This getting involved with, ... trying to control, ... fighting with the sensation, ... resisting the sensation etc., is only fighting with the Dhamma (Truth of the Present Moment). Whenever anyone fights and tries to control or hardens the mind to the Dhamma of the present moment, they cause themselves undue suffering and pain. Another way of fighting the Dhamma is by taking the sensation personally. This worsens the pain and as a result, it hurts even more. Thus, one must learn to open and lovingly-accept the present moment without that ’ego-identification’ and the thinking or internally verbalization about, or taking it as “I am that”. This is how one gains calmness and composure of mind, as well as, equanimity, full awareness, and mindfulness.

The Lord Buddha taught us three kinds of actions while meditating or during our daily activities. They are, **“Love Where We Are At, Love What We Are Doing in the Present Moment, and Love Who We**

Are With" . These simple explanations allow one to be completely accepting of the present moment. **"To Love where We Are At"** means to accept the fact that when one is sifting in meditation, things are not always like they want them to he. **"To Love What We Are Doing"** means to open up the mind and allow whatever arises in the present moment, to present itself without our getting attached to it. A good acronym for this is "DROPS" which means "Don't Resist Or Push. Soften". Whatever arises, one does not resist or push. Just soften into it, open the mind and accept it. In other words to **"Love What We Are Doing"** . **"To Love Who We Are With"** , means to love oneself enough so that they see and let go of all kinds of attachments which causes pain to arise in their body and mind. The recognition that one causes their own suffering is a major realization. When one truly loves themselves, they will see the pain and sorrow and lovingly let it go. This is done by letting go of the thinking about. Thus, they let go of the attachment and the ego identification with it.

> ***He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body [of breath]'; he trains thus 'I shall breatheout experiencing the whole body [of breath]';***

This part of the sutta means that the meditator knows when the breath is starting and stopping on the in-breath. One also knows when the breath is starting and stopping on the out-breath. The meditator doesn't have to over-focus the mind or 'concentrate' on the breath, or take this breathing as the object of extreme concentration'. One simply ***knows*** what the breath is doing in the present moment. Their mindfulness is sharp enough to know what the breath is doing at all times, *without controlling the breath in any way.* Just let the breath and the awareness be a natural process.

> ***He trains thus: 'I shall breath in tranquilizing the bodily formation'; he trains thus: 'I shall breath out tranquilizing the bodily formation'.***

This simple statement is the ***most important part*** of the meditation instructions. It instructs one to notice the tightness which arises in the head with every arising of a consciousness, and let that tightness go, while on the in-breath and out-breath. Then one feels their mind open up, expand, relax and become tranquil. Everytime they see that the mind is distracted away

from the breath, they simply let go of the distraction, relax the tightness in the head by letting go of the tightness, feel the mind become open, expanded, relaxed, calm and clean. Next, one softly re-directs the mind back to the breath, on the in-breath relaxes, expands and calms the tightness in the head and mind ..... on the out-breath relaxes, expands and calms the tension in the head and mind. For example, when a thought arises, just let the thought go. Don't continue thinking, even if one is in mid-sentence. Just softly let the thought go. If the distraction is a sensation, firstly open the mind and let go of the aversion to the sensation, then open and expand the mind before re-directing one's attention back to the breath.

This opening up, expanding and letting go of the tightness in the head is actually letting go of the subtle 'ego identification' which attaches itself to everything as it arises. Thus, when one lets go of this tension, they are actually letting go of all ignorance which causes rebirth.

When the meditation instructions here are followed closely, there will be no 'sign or nimitta' arising in the mind (i.e., no lights or other kinds of mind-made objects, which arise in the mind when one is practicing 'concentration meditation'). The mind naturally becomes calm and tranquil. One need not try to force the mind to stay on the object of meditation through strong concentration' which causes tension and pain in the head. One begins to realize the true nature of all phenomenon as being impermanent (anicca), unsatisfactory (dukkha), and not-self (anatta).

Thus, when one practices "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation", they are aware of the in-breath and at the same time, the relaxation of the tightness in the head and the mind. They are also aware of the out-breath and again, at the same time, the relaxation of the tightness in the head and mind. It is alright if one happens to miss one in-breath or one out-breath at first. They should not put unnecessary pressure on themselves which might cause them to think how difficult this practice is. This is actually an incredibly easy practice and a simple way to develop the mind. Thus, if one occasionally misses the in-breath or out-breath, just let it go and catch the next in-breath or out-breath. Simple and easy, isn't it? At first, the breath may seem to be very fast and difficult to notice. However, as one continues with their practice, the meditation becomes easier and they will not miss the in-breath or out-breath that much. After all, this is a gradual training. There is no need to put undue pressure on oneself. Simply relax into the meditation.

When one practices "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation", the breath does not become subtle and difficult to observe. If this happens, then the meditator

is 'concentrating' too much on the breath. Also, the tightness in the head is not relaxed enough. If the breath seems to disappear again, the meditator is focusing their 'concentration' and not tranquilizing the mind enough. The jhanas (meditation stages) will appear by themselves as the mind becomes calm and peaceful. The meditator does not have to push, force or 'concentrate with a fixed mind'. Actually, the Lord Buddha taught a most natural form of meditation that works for every type of personality or individual.

> ***19] "He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing joy'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing joy'.***

This refers to the attainment of the first two jhanas (meditation stages). The description of these stages is a set formula that is repeated many times in the suttas[12]. We will now look into the description of these first two jhanas:

> *Here quite secluded from sensual pleasures, . . .*

When one starts their meditation session, they first close their eyes. This is being secluded from the sensual pleasure of seeing. When a sound distracts the mind, the instructions are to let the sound be there by itself, without thinking about whether one likes the sound or not. Simply let the sound go. . . let go of the mental fist around the sound. . . relax the tightness in the head, feel the mind become calm and at ease. . . redirect the attention back to the object of meditation, i.e., the breath. Relax the tightness in the head, feel the mind open up, expand and become tranquil on the in-breath, relax the tightness in the head on the out-breath, feel the mind become open, peaceful and calm. One stays with the breath and relaxes the tension and mind until the next distraction appears by itself.

One does this with smelling, tasting, bodily sensations, and thoughts or any kind of sensual pleasure which distracts the mind away from the breath. Whenever there is a distraction of the sense-doors one must let it go, relax that mental fist around the distraction . . . loosen the tightness in the head, open and expand the mind,. . . redirect the attention back to the breath again. It doesn't matter how many times the sensual pleasure arises. One

[12]For example, see Mahasakuludayi Sutta, Sutta Number 77 and Anupada Sutta, Sutta Number 111. Both of these suttas are found in the Majjhima Nikaya.

has to allow it to be there everytime it arises. Just remember to let it go. . . loosen the tightness in the head, feel the mind expand and come back to the breath.

. . . secluded from unwholesome states. . .

When the mind is distracted from the breath and begins to think about feelings that arise, there is a tendency for the mind to like or dislike that feeling. This thinking about and trying to control feelings by thinking about them, causes the feeling to get bigger and more intense. Thus, more pain arises. This mind/body process is made up of five different aggregates which are affected by clinging. The meditator has a physical body, feelings (both mental and physical), perception (recognition}, volition or thoughts or free will and consciousness. By seeing this, one can clearly observe that feelings are one thing and thoughts are another. Unfortunately, all of us has developed the habit of trying to think our feelings away. This only makes the feelings bigger and more intense. As a result, more pain and suffering arise.

When one practices the Lord Buddha's meditation method, they must understand and let go this old habit of thinking. Thus, when a feeling arises, no matter whether it is physical or emotional, first, let go of that tight mental fist around the feeling. . . now relax the tightness in the head. . . feel the mind expand, then become calm and tranquil. . . next redirect the attention back to the breath. When one does this, they are seeing the true nature of that feeling: It wasn't there. . . now it arose by itself, i.e. change or impermanence. One certainly does not request for this incredibly painful sensation to arise, nor do they ask at that time to feel angry, sad, fearful, depressed, doubtful or whatever the catch of the day happens to be. These feelings arise by themselves, without one's desire for them to arise. They last as long as they last. The more one tries to control, fight, or push away these feelings, the more they stay and become very much bigger and extra intense. This is because whenever one wants to control the feeling, they are identifying with that sensation or emotion as being theirs personally. One tends to think about – how much it hurts, where did it come from, why does it have to bother them now, "Oh! I hate that feeling and want it to go away".

Every thought about the feeling is the ego-identification with that feeling. Everytime one tries to resist what is happening in the present moment, they are fighting with the *Dhamma of the Present Moment.* When a painful or even a pleasant feeling arises, the Truth is – it is there. Any resistance, trying to control, wishing it away with thoughts, or fighting that feeling in any way,

only causes more suffering to arise. Actually whenever a feeling arises, one opens the mind . . . lets go of the want to control . . . lovingly-accepts the fact that this feeling is there, and allows it to be there by itself. ***Don't Resist Or Push. Soften*** ..... This DROPS is the key to having an accepting and open mind which leads to the development of equanimity. Any slightest resistance or tightness means that there is some ego-identification still attached to it.

Let's say that a friend came up and scolded you in the early morning after you went to work. What happened to your mind? If you were like most people you scolded them back because you were angry and fighting. When the friend went away, what did you think about? What you said. . . what your friend said. . . what you should have said. . . I'm right for feeling the way I do and for what I said. . . they are wrong for what they said and did. . . And so it went. This feeling of anger is strong and there are thoughts which are attached to that feeling.

After a little while you distract yourself with some other activities. But the anger is still there and if someone comes to talk to you, chances are good that you will complain about your other friend who scolded you. Thus, at that time you are giving your dissatisfaction and anger to someone else and that affects them in a negative way. At different times during the day, these feelings and the thoughts that you are attached to them, arise. As a matter of fact, these thoughts are just like they were recorded on a cassette tape. They come back in the same order and with exactly the same words. After the end of the day you would have distracted yourself such that this feeling doesn't come up so often. Then comes the time to sit in meditation and purify the mind. But what arises? This feeling of anger, and the associate thoughts! Thus, here we go again. But this time, as you let go of getting involved with those feelings and thoughts, you begin to let them go. Seeing that these thoughts cause the feeling to grow, the meditator begins to soften the mind. Never mind, it just isn't that important". . . Soften. . . "Let it be". . . open the mind and let go of that tight mental knot around these thoughts. . . let go of the aversion to the feeling. . . feel the mind begin to expand then relax. . . now loosen the tightness in the head. . . feel the mind become calm, what relief! Now gently go back to the breath. . . on the in-breath loosen the tightness in the head. . . on the out-breath relax the tightness in the head. . . always feeling the mind open up, expand, and become tranquil.

Then the anger comes up again, and so, again you do the same thing. . . let it be there by itself without getting involved with the thinking about it. . . open and relax the mental hold of it. . . loosen the tightness in the head.

. . softly redirect the attention back to the breath again. It doesn't matter how many times the mind goes back to that feeling of anger. It is treated in the same way everytime. One is not taking that feeling personally when they let the feeling be there by itself. Thus, there is no ego-identification with that feeling. This is seeing the true nature of that feeling, isn't it? The feeling wasn't there before, but now it is. This is seeing impermanence. When that feeling arises, it takes away the tranquility and peace. That is definitely painful, a true form of suffering. When one allows the feeling to be there by itself without getting involved or thinking about it, open their mind and relax the tightness away, they are experiencing the not-self nature at that time. Thus, when one practices "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation", they do experience the three characteristics of existence: impermanence, suffering, and not-self.

As one continues to loosen the mind and let go of any distraction, the attachment becomes smaller and weaker. Finally it doesn't have enough strength to arise any more. When this happens, the mind becomes filled with relief and joy. *This letting go of attachment is being secluded from unwholesome states.* When one lets go and the joy arises, it lasts for a period of time. As a result, the mind becomes very tranquil and peaceful. The meditator experiences a mind which stays on the object of meditation very easily. When this is done repeatedly, the mind will naturally become calm and composed by itself. At that time, one begins to develop some equanimity and balance of mind.

> . . .The Bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the first Jhana (meditation stage), which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with joy and pleasure born of seclusion.

All of these different factors make up what is commonly called the first jhana (meditation stage). At that time there can still exists some very little wandering thoughts. If the mind wanders away from the breath and the meditator relaxes the mind, the wandering thoughts are noticed very quickly. Simply let go. . . relax the tightness before coming back to the breath. Some meditation teachers call this access concentration. But actually they are looking at things from the viewpoint of "concentration meditation" and not "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation".

Applied and Sustained Thought are descriptions of the thinking mind and discursive thinking (wandering thought). Some translations call initial and sustained thought as thinking and pondering. There can still be directed

thoughts in each one of the different jhanas (meditation stages). The difference between directed thought and wandering thoughts is: With wandering thoughts, one thinks about what happened in the past or what will happen in the future, or daydream about what they would like to see. Directed thought is about what is happening in the present moment. These are observation thoughts i.e., mind feels very happy right now, or mind is very calm, or body feels very still and peaceful right now, etc. There is also another way of looking at Applied and Sustained Thought. Applied Thought is the mind that notices when the mind is distracted and brings the attention back to the breath. Sustained Thought is the mind that stays on the breath without slipping away again.

When the mind begins to stay on the object of meditation for longer and longer periods of time, the relief and joy will become quite strong. One will naturally feel like smiling because the joy is such a pleasurable feeling in both the mind and body. At that time, the body and mind feels very light until it is almost like floating. This is quite a nice and pleasant experience. Some meditation teachers tell their students that when joy arises, *"Don't Be Attached!"* Thus, these students become fearful of that joy and try to push it away so that they won't possibly have the chance to become attached. However, this is not the correct thing to do because it doesn't matter what kind of feeling that arises, either pleasurable or unpleasurable or neutral, their job is to see that the mind stays on the breath and opening then relaxing their mind.

If the mind is pulled away by a feeling, simply let it be there by itself and relax the tightness in the head, feel the mind open and expand, then go back to the breath. Attachment or craving comes from getting involved with liking or disliking what arises in the present moment whereas clinging is the thinking about it. One will not become attached when they allow whatever arises to be there by itself, then come back to the object of meditation. After the joy fades away, the mind will become very calm, peaceful and comfortable. It is this comfortable and tranquil feeling that is called *happiness born of seclusion.* At first, one can sit in this stage of meditation for ten or fifteen minutes and longer with practice. This is the first jhana (meditation stage) and it will arise when one has let go of sensual pleasure for a period of time, and have also let go of unwholesome habits or states of mind which stops the meditator from having a mind without distractions in it.

When one has experienced this state of calm, they begin to realize the reasons that they are meditating. At that time, the mind, is nicely composed

and happy with very few distractions. There is more peace of mind than has ever been experienced before. Thus, after that experience, one becomes enthusiastic and wants it to happen every time they sit. BUT, that very desire to have those calm states of mind is the very thing which stops them from arising! They then try even harder and put in more effort. Unfortunately, the mind only becomes more and more restless and unsettled. This is due to the desire for something to happen in a particular way. When it doesn't happen that way, one pushes harder and tries to force things to be calm and tranquil.

As a result, one can't experience this calm stage of meditation due to the attachment of wanting things to occur as they want. This desire causes one to lean out of the present moment and to try to make the next present moment the way they want it to be. When that present moment isn't right, they try even harder. However, this calm state of mind will occur when it occurs. Just relax and let go of that strong desire, calm down and stop expecting things to work according to one's own desires and attachments. After the first experience of jhana (a meditation stage), the mind may become quite active the next lime one sits in meditation. But, their mindfulness is sharp and is able to recognize when the mind goes away quickly. Then they let it go, open the mind up, and return the attention back to the breath. Calming and opening on the in-breath, calming and loosening the mind on the out-breath. . . Before long, the mind will settle down again and the joy will arise again. When it fades away, one will again experience that comfortable happy feeling, as well as a mind that is still and at ease.

At this time, one still has the experience of all the five aggregates affected by clinging. They can still hear things, or have feelings arise in the body. For example, they would know when a mosquito lands on them. One may have some thoughts about that mosquito, but they quickly recognize that this is a distraction and let it go. . . loosen the tension in the head and mind, then softly come back to the breath.

As one continues to open and calm the mind on the in and out breath, eventually they will arrive at a stage where there are no more wandering thoughts. The joy is a little stronger, and lasts a little longer. When it fades away, the comfortable feeling of happiness is stronger and the calm mind goes deeper into the breath. This state is described as:

> *Again with the stilling of applied and sustained thought, the Bhikkhu, enters and abides in the second jhana (meaning a med-*

> *itation stage), which has self-confidence and singleness of mind without applied and sustained thought, with joy and happiness born of stillness of mind.*

The stilling of applied and sustained thought means that at that time, the mind becomes very still and stays on the object of meditation quite nicely. There is no discursive thinking about the past or future. However, there can still be observation thoughts. Remember that true meditation is silent, open observation. There is still feeling in the body as all of the sense doors are working. But, for example, if a sound arises, it doesn't make the mind shake of move. One knows where they are and what they are doing. The self-confidence mentioned in the sutta, comes from the confidence one gains when they see clearly for themselves how well the meditation works. The self-confidence not only arises when one is sitting in meditation but, also during the daily activities too. The singleness of mind means that the mind is very calm and doesn't run around. It is contented to stay on the breath and keep opening and loosening on the in and out breaths. These are the description of the first two jhanas (meditation stages).

We now return to the Anapanasati Sutta.

> ***He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing Happiness'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing happiness.'***

As one continues onwards with their practice and keep calming and opening the mind, eventually they reach a stage where the feeling of joy becomes too coarse and it naturally won't arise any more. This is always a rather comical time for the teacher because the meditator comes to the teacher and says:

Student:	'There's something wrong with my meditation!'
Teacher:	'Why do you say that?'
Student:	'I don't feel anymore joy',
Teacher:	'Is that bad?'
Student:	'No, of course not, but still I don't feel anymore joy, why?'
Teacher:	'Do you feel comfortable and more calm than ever before, does your mind have a strong sense of balance in it, do you feel very much at ease?'
Student:	'Yes, I feel all of that, but I don't feel anymore joy!'
Teacher:	'Good, continue. Everything is going along just fine. Relax and stop demanding that joy arises when you want it to.'

The joy fades away by itself, and a very strong sense of balance and calm becomes quite apparent. One can still hear sounds, and even though the body seems to disappear, at times one would know if someone were to touch them during their sitting meditation. However, the mind does not get distracted by it. This is what it means when the sutta says the meditator has full awareness. It is described as:

> *"Again, with the fading away as well of joy, a Bhikkhu abides in equanimity, and mindful and fully aware, still feeling happiness (or pleasure) with the body, he enters upon and abides in the third jhana (meditation stage), on account of which noble one's announce: 'He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful'.*

With the description above, one can plainly see that being in the third jhana (meditation stage), the mind is very clear, alert and balanced. They are aware of what is happening around them, but the mind stays on the object of meditation easily and comfortably. Being alert (being mindful) and having equanimity in the mind is an unusual thing to experience because this state of meditation is the highest and best feeling that they have ever experienced in their whole life. Furthermore, one is not attached to it due to the strong equanimity.

At the same time, the body and mind is exceptionally relaxed and at ease. what a nice state to be in! This is why this state is praised by noble ones. Besides this easing of the tightness in the head, the body loooses tension and the feeling of sensations begins to disappear. This is because the tightness in

the mind causes tension in the body. But now, the mind is so comfortable and tension free that the tension in the sensation of the body goes away too. When this happens, the body becomes so soft and comfortable that there is nothing to feel. However, one is aware if anyone were to touch them. This is the meaning of being mindful and fully aware. The mind knows what is happening around it but it just does not shake or becomes disturbed.

This is what one calls experiencing happiness on the in and out breath. Some "Fixed Concentration Meditation" teachers say that when one is in this state of jhana, the meditator can no longer experience the body or any of the sense doors. They claim that the meditator will not know if someone were to hit them with a stick or someone were to change their positions of their hands and feet. This is because their mind is so deeply absorbed into the object that they can't be fully aware. This is clearly not true if one were to read the suttas or when practicing "Tranquil Wisdom Meditation".

> ***He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the mental formation'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing the mental formation'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in tranquilizing the mental formation.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out tranquilizing the mental formation.'***

As one continues calming, expanding and relaxing the mind, it naturally begins to go deeper. Finally the feeling of pleasure in the body/mind becomes too coarse and the mind experiences exceptional equanimity and balance of mind. It is described thus in the suttas:

> *Here with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief a Bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the fourth jhana (meditation stage), which has neither pain or pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.*

When the mind becomes very calm and still, one experiences deep tranquility and equanimity of mind. They can still hear sounds and feel sensations with the body, but these things do not shake or move mind at all. Another description of this stage of meditation (jhana) is:

> *"My composed mind was purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability."*

This gives the serious meditator an idea of what to expect when one attains this stage. The mind is exceptionally clear, bright and alert. The mind can even see when a distraction begins to arise, then let it go and open up, expand and calm down again before coming back to the breath. The abandoning of pain and pleasure does not mean that occasionally pain or pleasure won't arise. They will arise, but the mind is in such a state of balance that it won't shake or become involved with the distractions. At that time the mind is very aware when pain or pleasure arises but the equanimity and mindfulness is so strong that it does not become concerned with it.

With the previous disappearance of joy and grief means one's mind has let go of the lower emotional states of liking and disliking. All of the stages of the lower jhanas (meditation states) involves letting go of emotional states of mind. At first, when one begins to learn about meditation, they let go of very low coarse states which frequently moves the mind. After they begin to learn how to calm the mind, they can sit for longer periods of time without any distractions arising. One then experiences the initial and sustained applications of mind and the other jhana factors. When the mind settles deeper, the initial and sustain application of the mind disappears. The joy becomes stronger for a while but gradually it becomes too coarse and the mind has too much movement in it. Thus, the mind will naturally go even deeper into the object of meditation and the joy fades away by itself. At this time there is equanimity, happiness, mindfulness and full awareness in the mind. All these states of mind are very pleasant experiences. But eventually, the happiness is too coarse a feeling and so, the mind goes deeper into the breath and at the same time, continues opening, expanding and relaxing. At this point the breath and the relaxing of the mind begin to arise together. Then the happiness fades away and all that remains in the mind is strong equanimity, exceptional mindfulness, and composure of mind. This is how one experiences and tranquilizes the mental formations. As Krishnamurti describes the true meditative state, "A meditative mind is silent. It is not the silence which thoughts can conceive of; it is not the silence of a still evening; it is the silence when thoughts, with all its images, its words and perceptions have entirely ceased. This meditative mind is the religious mind – the religion that is not touched by the church, the temples or by chants."

> ***20] "He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the mind'; he trains thus 'I shall breathe out experiencing the mind.'***

At this time, one's mind become very calm and any slightest disturbances is noticed and is let go quickly and easily. First, the mind lets go of tightness. . . now it goes back to the breath. . . opening, expanding and calming on the in-breath. . . loosening, stretching out and relaxing the mind on the out-breath.

> ***"He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in gladdening the mind'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out gladdening the mind.'***

When one reach this stage of meditation, they begin to experience a finer and more exalted type of joy, which is described as the Joy (Pharana Piti) Enlightenment Factor. The mind becomes very peacefully happy and at ease like never before. This is called gladdening the mind because it is such a pleasurable state to be in. At that time, the mind is exceptionally uplifted, very clear and the mindfulness is sharper than ever before. The equanimity is even more balanced and composed.

> ***"He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in stilling the mind'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out stilling the mind.'***

At this time, the mind becomes more subtle and calm, with very few distractions. When they do arise, they are quickly noticed, let go of, calm the mind and return back to the breath. Naturally, the breath and the calming of the mind becomes easier and more serene. They happen together naturally at the same time.

> ***"He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in liberating the mind'; he trains thus: '1 shall breathe out liberating the mind.'***

Liberating the mind means that one stays on the breath with enough joyful interest such that when the mind begins to move or go away from the breath, they are aware and let the distractions go without any identifying. One then relaxes the mind before coming back to the breath. When a hindrance arises, one sees it quickly and let it go without hesitation. At this point sloth and torpor, or restlessness and anxiety, are the biggest obstacles to one's practice. Whenever a hindrance arises, it will knock one out of the jhana and can cause all kinds of disturbances. The phrase liberating the mind also means to let go of the lower jhanas (meditation stages) and all of the jhana factors by not being attached (thinking about and identifying with) them in any way.

> ***“He trains thus: ’I shall breathe in contemplating impermanence’; he trains thus: ’I shall breathe out contemplating impermanence.’***

As one continues with their practice of meditation on the breath, plus calming and expanding the mind, eventually the mind becomes very deep and then they begin to notice that the mind is expanding and getting bigger. Silence and spaciousness of mind go together. The immensity of silence is the immensity of the mind in which a center does not exist; actually speaking at this time, there is no center and there is no outer edges. It continually grows and expands. One begins to see that there are no boundaries, and space and mind are infinite. The Anupada Sutta, Sutta Number 111 in Majjhima Nikiya, described this as;

> *Again, by passing beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of all sense of resistance and by non-attraction to the perceptions of change, aware that space is infinite, the Bhikkhu enters into and abides in the base of infinite space. And the states in the base of infinite space – the perception of the base of infinite space and the unification of mind. One still has the five aggregates affected by clinging, the form, feelings, perception, volition (observation thoughts) and mind.*

Passing beyond perceptions of form, means that even though one knows that they have a body at that time, this awareness would not readily pull our mind towards it. In this state of jhana (meditation stage), they are very aware of the mind and what it is doing. The disappearance of all sense resistance and non-attraction to the perceptions of change means even though a pain arises in the body, one knows it but does not get involved with that sensation. They feel the mind growing, changing and expanding but, they are not distracted from the breath or the relaxing of the mind. The meditator’s mind is continually moving and expanding but their mind accepts this as it truly is. Seeing impermanence and how one’s mind changes and expands, one realizes that this phenomena is part of an impersonal process which they have no control.

As one continues on with the practice of opening and calming the mind on the in-breath and the out-breath, they will eventually start to see consciousness arising and passing away. It is continually coming up and going away, arising and passing away, without a break! The consciousness keeps

coming into being, then vanishing in all the sense doors. This is described in the Anupada Sutta as:

> *Again, by completely surmounting the base of infinite space, aware that consciousness is infinite, a Bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the realm of infinite consciousness. And the states in the base of infinite consciousness – the perception of the base of infinite consciousness and the unification of mind. One still has the five aggregates affected by clinging, the bodily form, the feeling, perception, volition (observation thoughts) and mind.*

When one is in this state of infinite consciousness, there can still arise some hindrances like torpor or dullness of mind, or restlessness. These hindrances arise because the energy that they put into their practice isn't quite correct. When there is too little energy, one experiences dullness (rarely does the meditator have sleepiness at this time). On the other hand, if they try too hard or put too much energy into the practice, restlessness will arise. Both of these hindrances will knock one out of the jhana while they are present in the mind. When one is in this state, they see change happen so rapidly and continually, that it becomes very tiresome. They begin to see just how much unsatisfactoriness arises with each consciousness.

Thus, one sees from first hand, impermanence, suffering, and they know that they have no control over these events. They happen by themselves. As a result, one sees the not-self nature of this psycho-physical process. This is how one contemplates impermanence. It is not done by thinking about it, but by realizing it through their own personal experience.

We return to the Anapanasati Sutta.

> ***"He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating fading away'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating fading away.'***

As one continues on with their practice on the in-breath, letting go and calming the mind, and on the out-breath, letting go and calming the mind. Now the mind naturally lets go of all consciousness which were so readily seen before. The mind then gets into the realm of 'nothingness'. This is when there is no external thing for the mind to see. There is mind looking at nothing outside of itself. The Anupada Sutta say this:

> *"Again, by completely surmounting the base of infinite consciousness, aware that there is 'nothing'; the Bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the base of nothingness. And the states in the base of 'nothingness' – the perception of the base of nothingness and the unification of mind, again there are still the five aggregates affected by clinging, the bodily form, feeling, perception, volition (observation thoughts), and mind.*

As odd as this may sound, it is an exceptionally interesting state to be in. There are still many things to watch and observe although there is nothing to see outside of mind and mental factors. One still has the five aggregates affected by clinging, and some of the hindrances can still pop-up whenever one becomes either too lax or too energetic. It is here that the Seven Enlightenment Factors become very important. They can be seen one by one as they occur. When torpor arises, one must put the mind back into balance by arousing the enlightenment factor of mindfulness, investigation of one's experience, energy, and joy. If restlessness arises, one must arouse the enlightenment factors of mindfulness, tranquility, stillness, and equanimity. (More will be discussed later.) At this time, the mind becomes very subtle and tricky. It becomes very interesting to see the subtle ways it distracts one from meditation. However, one s mindfulness is quite strong and these tricks can be seen very easily.

> ***He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating cessation'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating cessation.'***

One still continues on calming the mind on the in and out breath. At this time, the mind begins to get smaller and it seems to shrink. The mind becomes very subtle and still. This is described in the Anupada Sutta as:

> *"Again, by completely surmounting the base of nothingness, the Bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the base of 'neither-perception nor non-perception.*

The mind becomes so small and has such little movement, that it is sometimes difficult to know whether there is a mind or not. It is also difficult to know if there is perception of a mind. This extremely fine state of mind is not easy to attain, yet it is attainable if one continues on with their practice of calming

and expanding the mind when they know that mind is present. At this time, one cannot see the breath any longer, but there are still some feelings which arise. This is when one begins to sit for long periods of time. At this time, the meditation is the total tranquilizing and releasing of all energy. Also one must be innocent of time, the longer one sits the better. One begins to sit for three, four or five hours and this can be extended during retreats or at home with one's daily practice. This is because it is such an interesting state to be in! At this time, they can still experience an occasional feeling in the body. As one continues on with their practice and keep opening, expanding and calming their mind, the subtly becomes very fine and the mind does not move at all. Eventually one experiences the state called 'Nirodha Samapatti' or the cessation of both perception and feeling.

> ***"He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating relinquishment'; he trains thus: 'I shall breath out contemplating relinquishment.'***

This state of meditation is not the experience of the Supramundane Nibbana yet, but it is very close at that time. One experiences the Supramundane Nibbana when the meditator sees all of the twelve links of Dependent Origination (Paticcasamuppada) both forwards and backwards. This happens after the perception and feeling comes back and is noticed. With the seeing of the final ignorance, there is a change in the mind. It becomes dispassionate, and completely lets go of the belief in a permanent unchanging self or soul. This is the only way one can experience the supramundane state of nibbana, that is by seeing directly all of the links of Dependent Origination. This is why it is called the 'Doctrine of Awakening'. The Anupada Sutta description is as follows:

> *"Again, by completely surmounting the base of neither-perception nor non-perception, the Bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the cessation of perception and feeling. And his taints are destroyed by his seeing with wisdom.*

When one is in the state of the cessation of perception and feeling, they will not know that they are in it. Why? It is because they do not have any perception or feeling at all! It is like all the lights were turned off on a very dark night. At that time one can not see anything at all, not even if they were to put their hands in front of their faces. This state is similar as there

is no perception or feeling at all. One may sit in this state for a period of time. When the perception and feeling comes back, and if their mindfulness is sharp enough, they will see directly the Second Noble Truth or the cause of suffering (i.e., the cause and effect relationship of dependent origination). When one has seen all of them then, they will see directly the Third Noble Truth or the cessation of suffering (i.e., how all of these links cease to be and how letting go of one leads directly to the letting go of another). This is automatically seen by the meditator. It does not matter whether they have studied dependent origination or not. This is direct knowledge, not memorized or studied knowledge. The statement: 'And his taints are destroyed by his seeing with wisdom' means seeing and realizing all of the Noble Truths directly. It was said, "if one sees dependent origination, they see the Second and Third Noble Truth." But in order to see the origin of suffering one has to know what suffering is! Thus, if one sees the ceasing of the suffering i.e., the Third Noble Truth, they naturally see the Fourth Noble Truth. One must practice the way leading to the cessation of the suffering in order to see the other three Noble Truths. And this is the Fourth Noble Truth. Thus, seeing Dependent Origination directly, means that one sees and realizes all of the Noble Truths. This is how one contemplates relinquishment.

> ***22] "Bhikkhus, that is how mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, so that it is of great fruit and great benefit"***

Fulfillment of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness

> ***23] "And how, Bhikkhus, does mindfulness of breathing, developed and cultivated, fulfill the Four Foundations of Mindfulness?***
>
> ***24] "Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a Bhikkhu, breathing in long, understands: 'I breathe in long,' or breathing out long understands: 'I breathe out long'; Breathing in short, understands: '1 breathe in short,' or breathing out short, understands: 'I breathe out short':***

The 'on whatever occasion', is very interesting and has far reaching implications. 'On whatever occasion' does not mean only while sitting in med-

itation, but, all of the time. During one's daily activities, when the mind becomes heavy and full of thoughts, one notices it, simply lets go of the thoughts, calms and loosens the tightness in the mind, feels the mind expand and becomes tranquil then goes back to the breath for one or two breaths. This will help greatly in calming the mind and to improve our mindfulness during one's daily activities. This is definitely a practical way to practice one's daily activities and improve their awareness of states of consciousness. Everytime one does this during their daily activities, it brings a kind of awareness and perspective into their lives. It becomes easier to see the three characteristics of existence, impermanence, suffering, and not-self nature, even while working or playing.

The statement, 'On whatever occasion', extends into one's walking meditation as well. Instead of putting the attention on one's feet, (as some meditation teachers recommend), they can still keep their attention on the mind, relaxing on the in and out breath, while walking. This is mindfulness of body (the breath body) and can even extend into other activities. The mindfulness of mind objects is a very important aspect to be aware of and is much easier to watch than the physical body. It is easy to tell when the mind is tight and tense. At that time one can relax, loosen the tightness in the head then come back to the breath for one or two breaths, if they do not have time to do more right then. Remember that the first and second verses in the Dhammapada, *"Mind is the forerunner of all (good and bad) states. Mind is chief; mind-made are they."* Everything follows the mind, be it happiness or suffering. By trying to follow all the movements of the body, one cannot see the mind clearly enough to realize the tightness caused by that movement and consciousness. Thus, directly being aware of the mind and all of its movements and tendencies to tighten was what the Lord Buddha intended, when he said "On any occasion".

> ***He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body (of breath)'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body (of breath)'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in tranquilizing the bodily formation'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out tranquilizing the bodily formation' – On that occasion a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. I say that this is a certain***

> ***body among the bodies, namely, in-breathing and out-breathing. That is why on that occasion a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.***

The statements about experiencing the whole body [of breath], and the tranquilizing of the bodily formations have already been discussed. Thus, we won't repeat that section here. Contemplating the body as a body is self explanatory about the breath. Being ardent means working hard, or being ever alert. Fully aware and mindful, is pertaining to the alertness of the mind when it is in the jhanas (meditation stages) as well as during the daily activities. When one is in the "Tranquility jhanas", they are very aware of what is happening around them and their mindfulness is sharp and clear. One is able to observe all of the mind states, feelings, sensation, or distraction as well as the jhana factors when they arise in the mind, i.e., the joy, happiness, equanimity, stillness of mind, the calm composure of mind etc.

Having put away covetousness and grief for the world, means the mind has gone beyond the simple liking and disliking of distractions, emotions, painful feelings, pleasant feelings, happy feelings, and the thinking about them. It means to let go of attachment to things which cause suffering to arise. The rest of the paragraph is just repeating that the breath meditation is part of the mindfulness of breathing, and that it conforms with the First Foundation of Mindfulness of the Body.

> ***25] "Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion, a Bhikkhu trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing joy'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing joy'; He trains thus "I shall breathe in experiencing happiness'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing happiness'; He trains thus: '1 shall breathe in experiencing the mental formation'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing the mental formation'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in tranquilizing the mental formation'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out tranquilizing the mental formation' -***

This is again a repetition of the previous statement, and thus, we will continue without further delay.

> ***On that occasion a Bhikkhu abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. I say that this is a certain feeling among feelings, namely, giving close attention to the in-breathing and out-breathing. That is why on that occasion a Bhikkhu abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.***

This describes all kinds of feelings which occurs when one is in the meditation stages of the first four jhanas (meditation stages). It also says that the most important feeling among these feelings is the in and out breath. This is because one gets to experience the different stages of meditation. If they stop being attentive to the feeling of the breath, their meditation progress stops as well. The importance of staying with the feeling of the breath cannot be understated. And this is how the Second Foundation of Mindfulness of the Feeling is fulfilled.

> ***26] "Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a Bhikkhu trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the mind'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing the mind'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in gladdening the mind'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out gladdening the mind'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in stilling the mind'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out stilling the mind'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in liberating the mind'; He trains -thus: 'I shall breathe out liberating the mind'. -***

This is again a repetitive material. Please refer back to the other section for explanation.

> ***On that occasion a Bhikkhu abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. I do not say that there is development of mindfulness of breathing for one who is forgetful, who is not fully aware. That***

is why on that occasion a Bhikkhu abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.

The statement, "I do not say there is development of mindfulness of breathing for one who is forgetful, who is not fully aware" is one of the strongest statements made in this sutta. The function of mindfulness is to remember .To remember what? To remember to stay with the meditation object with joyful interest, and clear comprehension. When one is in the "Tranquility jhanas" (meditation stages) their mind becomes extraordinarily clear, bright, and alert. As one goes higher and higher along the path, more profound states of mind present themselves. The mindfulness and full awareness becomes so refined that even the slightest movement of the mind can be observed and let go of. The mind becomes looser, more expanded and spacious, free from tension and the breath becomes clearer and easier to watch. One's attention begins to be unwavering and the mind develops more composure than ever before. This is how the Third Foundation Of Mindfulness of Consciousness is fulfilled.

27] "Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a Bhikkhu trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating impermanence'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating impermanence'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating fading away'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating fading away'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating cessation'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating cessation'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating relinquishment'; He trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating relinquishment' -

This, again is referring to the immaterial jhanas (arupa jhanas, or meditation stages) and how one experiences the attainment of the Supramundane Nibbana. This sutta teaches one how to reach all of the meditation stages and to attain the highest bliss through the seeing of all of the Four Noble Truths and through the fulfillment of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness and the Seven Enlightenment Factors.

> ***On that occasion a Bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. Having seen with wisdom the abandoning of covetousness and grief, he closely looks on with equanimity. That is why on that occasion a Bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.***

When one experiences the higher jhanas (meditation stages), their mind develops a finer and finer balance in it. One then experiences the 'abandoning of covetousness and grief, he closely looks on with equanimity'. One sees clearly how tricky the mind truly is, and they keep a sense of equanimity in it, even though some unpleasant things may arise. The true balance of meditation is learnt when one goes into the immaterial realms of mind. This is when there is a real letting go of mental concepts and attachments. The mind develops such a beautiful equanimity that even when the most unpleasant feelings arise, the mind will accept it without being disturbed. This is how the Fourth Foundation of Mindfulness of Mind-Objects is fulfilled.

> ***28] "Bhikkhus, that is how Mindfulness of Breathing, developed and cultivated, fulfills the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.***

Fulfillment of the Seven Enlightenment Factors

> ***29] "And how, Bhikkhus, do the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, developed and cultivated, fulfill the Seven Enlightenment Factors?***
>
> ***30] "Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world – on that occasion unremitting mindfulness is established in him. On whatever occasion unremitting mindfulness is established in a Bhikkhu – on***

that occasion the Mindfulness Enlightenment Factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development, it comes to fulfillment in him.

Let us use a description from the Satipatthana Sutta for more clarification. It says:

"Here, there being the mindfulness enlightenment factor in him, a Bhikkhu understands: 'There is the mindfulness enlightenment factor in me'; or there being no mindfulness enlightenment factor in him, he understands: 'There is no mindfulness enlightenment factor in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen mindfulness enlightenment factor and how the arisen mindfulness enlightenment factor comes to fulfillment by development.

This is rather straight forward. It simply says that one knows when their mind is silent, sharp, clear and joyfully interested in the breath and the other things which arise. One also knows when the mindfulness is dull, not sharp, and mind tends to be a little bored or disinterested. When that happens, one knows that they must pick-up their interest and see how everything that arises is truly different. One then sees how every breath is different, never exactly the same. This is how the mindfulness enlightenment factor comes to fulfillment by development.

31] Abiding thus mindful, he investigates and examines that state with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it. On whatever occasion, abiding thus mindful, a Bhikkhu investigates and examines that state with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it – on that occasion the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.

It is a very important to be familiar with the factor of investigation of one's experience. This means whatever arises, whether it is any of the five hindrances, or an emotional state, or a physical feeling, they impersonally examine it with interest. This is done by not getting involved with thinking about that phenomenon, but only observing it, allowing it to be there, then

letting it go mentally – by opening up that tight mental fist which hardenly grabs it, relax, expand and allow that distraction to be there by itself without thinking about it . . . loosening the tightness in the mind/head . . . then redirecting the attention back to the breath. Everytime the mind is pulled, one tries to see the different aspects about that distraction. Then let it go, relax the mind and come back to the breath. In this way, they can become more familiar with the distraction and able to recognize it more quickly. This type of investigation is described in the Satipatthana Sutta as:

> *"Here, there being the investigation-of-experience enlightenment factor in him, a Bhikkhu understands: 'There is the investigation-of-experience enlightenment factor in me'; or there being no investigation-of-experience enlightenment factor in him, he understands: 'There is no investigation-of-experience enlightenment factor in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen investigation-of-experience enlightenment factor; and how the arisen investigation-of-experience enlightenment factor comes to fulfillment by development.*

To enable to bring forth the enlightenment factor of investigation-of-experience, one has to take a strong interest in how everything works. The more one examines their experiences, the easier it is to recognize all of the different and unusual aspects about the hindrances and distractions due to pain or emotional upset. When one sees these things clearly, it is much easier to let go of them. It is also important to develop the perspective that this is an impersonal process which is unsatisfactory and is always changing. This perspective enables one's practice to progress without periods of unclarity.

> ***32] "In one who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it, tireless energy is aroused. On whatever occasion tireless energy is aroused in a Bhikkhu who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it – on that occasion the energy enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.***

It takes a lot of energy and effort when one takes sincere interest into what is happening in the present moment and examines it with care. As

they use their energy and have a strong joyful interest, this causes even more energy to arise. This is described in the Satipatthana Suttas as:

> *"Here, there being the energy enlightenment factor in him, a Bhikkhu understands: 'There is the energy enlightenment factor in me'; or there being no energy enlightenment factor in him, he understands: 'There is no energy enlightenment factor in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen energy enlightenment factor and how the arisen energy enlightenment factor comes to fulfi1lment by development.*
>
> ***33] "In one who has aroused energy, unworldly joy arises*** (Unworldly joy (Ubbega Piti) refers to joy that is experienced while in one of the first two jhanas [meditation stages]. There is also the finer and higher type of joy which is called the all-pervading joy (Pharana Piti) which can be felt in all of the higher jhanas [meditation stages]. These are called unworldly because it has nothing at all to do with any sense pleasures (that is, the eye, ear, nose, tongue, or body).) ***On whatever occasion unworldly joy arises in a Bhikkhu who has aroused energy – on that occasion the joy enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.***

As one has more energy in staying on the breath, their mindfulness becomes sharper and their energy increases little by little. When this happens, the mind becomes quite happy and delights in staying on the breath and expanding the mind. This happy feeling has some excitement and is called uplifting joy (Ubbega Piti). There is another type of joy which arises in the higher meditation states and this is called the all-pervading joy (Pharana Piti). It doesn't have so much excitement and is very nice and cooling to the mind. These states of mind are not to be feared or pushed away. It is a natural process when one develops and progresses along with their practice of meditation. If they stay on the breath and open their minds with interest and do not get involved in enjoying the joy, no problems will arise. But, if one does happen to get involved with the joy, it will go away very quickly. As a result, they will most likely experience sleepiness or sloth and torpor The Satipatthana Sutta says:

> *"Here, there being the joy enlightenment factor a Bhikkhu understands: 'There is the joy enlightenment factor in me; or there being no joy enlightenment factor in him, he understands: 'There is no joy enlightenment factor in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen joy enlightenment factor, and how the arisen mindfulness enlightenment factor comes to fulfillment by development.*

These first four enlightenment factors are very important when one experiences sloth and torpor. Sloth means sleepiness and torpor means dullness of mind. When one gets into the fourth jhana and above, the two main hindrances which arise are restlessness and torpor. However, when one brings up the investigation factor of enlightenment and examines this torpor, they have to use more energy and this helps to overcome this dullness. When one gets into the higher jhanas they must learn to fine tune their practice little by little. By being familiar with these enlightenment factors, one will learn how to eventually balance all of the factors. This directly leads to the supramundane state of Nibbana.

The most important key for success in meditation is the first enlightenment factor of mindfulness. Without mindfulness, one cannot possibly reach any of these meditation stages. Mindfulness is the main key to overcome both sloth and torpor, and restlessness. Remember these hindrances can come at any time and knock the meditator right out of any of the meditation stages, even up to the realm of neither-perception nor non-perception. Thus, one must be very careful to recognize these enlightenment factors and skillful in learning how to use them when it is appropriate. The next three enlightenment factors are important to overcome restlessness.

> ***34] "In one who is joyful, the body and the mind become tranquil. On whatever occasion the body and the mind become tranquil in a Bhikkhu who is joyful – on that occasion the tranquillity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.***

When joy arises in the mind, one feels very pleasant feelings in the body and mind. This is true, even in the higher stages of meditation, like the immaterial states of jhana (meditation stages). After a while, the joy fades a little and one's mind becomes exceptionally calm and peaceful. This state is

called the enlightenment factor of tranquility. At that time, one's body and mind become extraordinarily peaceful and calm. The Satipatthana Sutta describes it thus:

> *"Here, there being the tranquility enlightenment factor in him, a Bhikkhu understands: 'There is the tranquility enlightenment factor in me'; or there being no tranquility enlightenment factor in him, he understands, 'There is no tranquility enlightenment factor in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen tranquility enlightenment factor and how the arisen tranquility enlightenment factor comes to fulfillment by development.*

Actually, the strongest part of the tranquility enlightenment factor is the bodily feeling. It is very nice, calm and with a feeling of strong peace. This is especially noticed when one is experiencing the first three immaterial jhanas (meditation stages) which are the realm of infinite space, the realm of infinite consciousness and the realm of nothingness.

> ***35] "In one whose body is tranquil and who feels pleasure, the mind becomes still and composed. On whatever occasion the mind becomes still and composed in a Bhikkhu whose body is tranquil and who feels pleasure – on that occasion the stillness enlightenment factor*** (This is frequently called the concentration enlightenment factor, but this term is too misunderstood. So the author prefers to use stillness enlightenment factor) ***is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.***

As one's mind and body become more tranquil and at ease, the mind stays on the breath and the expanding mind more naturally, without any distractions. It is much easier to open and relax the mind with each in and out breath. The mind is definitely composed and unruffled by any external or internal distractions. There comes a time when mind prefers to stay still on the meditation object, without undue force or trying to concentrate. It stays on the breath for very long periods of time. Of course, at this time, there is very sharp mindfulness and full awareness. One still has full awareness even when they reach the realm of nothingness. The mind does not waver or

move away from the breath even though one hears sounds or knows that a mosquito has landed on them. The mindfulness of breathing and stillness are very clear and sharp to observe. When one is in the realm of nothingness, they can explore and watch many different aspects of the mind. Their mind is also very clear, even though one is in the lower meditation stages. Since one's mind is still, they can observe things quite clearly, too. This can be called the action of silence. When the mind is absolutely silent, it is the blessing that everyone is seeking. In this silence, every quality of silence is perfection of the present moment. The Satipatthana Sutta describes this as:

> "Here, there being the stillness enlightenment factor in him, a Bhikkhu understands: 'There is the stillness enlightenment factor in me'; or there being no stillness enlightenment factor in him, he understands: 'There is no stillness enlightenment factor in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen stillness enlightenment factor and how the arisen enlightenment factor comes to fulfillment by development.
>
> ***36] "He closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus stilled and composed. On whatever occasion a Bhikkhu closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus stilled and composed – on that occasion the equanimity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.***

The equanimity enlightenment factor is again, a very important factor to develop. It balances the mind when it becomes unsettled. The equanimity enlightenment factor is the only factor which allows the mind to lovingly-accept whatever arises in the present moment. For example, if there arise any kinds of pain (physical or emotional), it doesn't distract the meditator. The equanimity enlightenment factor is the factor which helps one to see things impersonally and without the ego-identification of getting involved with distractions. It is the seeing of what arises in the moment, then going beyond it with balance. The seeing of anatta (not-self) is the very thing which allows one to progress rapidly along the Lord Buddha's Path. But one must be somewhat careful with equanimity because it is often mistaken to be indifference. Indifference has some dissatisfaction and aversion in it, but not equanimity. Equanimity has only openness and complete acceptance of

everything that arises in the present moment. Equanimity opens the mind totally. Indifference closes it, and tries to ignore what is happening in the moment. The Satipatthana Sutta describes it thus:

> *"Here, there being the equanimity enlightenment factor in him, a Bhikkhu understands: 'There is the equanimity enlightenment factor in me'; or there being no equanimity enlightenment factor in him, he understands: 'There is no equanimity enlightenment factor in me'; and he also understands how there comes to be the unarisen equanimity enlightenment factor and how the arisen equanimity enlightenment factor comes to fulfillment by development.*

These last three enlightenment factors, tranquility, stillness, and equanimity factors, will greatly assist one when restlessness arises in the mind. Restlessness makes the mind think many thoughts and causes lots of unpleasant feelings to arise in the body. As a result, one feels like breaking their meditation and distracting themselves in one way or another. To say the least, it is a very hard mind that causes suffering to he more noticeable. The only way to overcome restlessness is by developing stillness of mind and tranquility of body. When the mind has restlessness in it, there is no balance of mind at all. Instead, there is a lot of ego-identification with that terrible feeling. Thus, to overcome this hindrance, one has to allow it to be there by itself and still the mind. By bringing forth the stillness, tranquility, and equanimity enlightenment factors and focusing the mind on these different factors, they will overcome the restlessness.

The two major hindrances that always seem to trouble meditators are torpor, or dullness of mind, and restlessness or over activity of mind. One had better become friends with these two hindrances, because they will stay around until one becomes an arahat. Thus, the sooner we drop all resistance to these states when they arise and begin to explore them with joyful interest, the faster we will be able to recognize them. As a result, we will be able to let them go faster and return into the jhana (meditation stage).

> ***37] "Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a Bhikkhu abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. . . (this whole formula repeats itself***

> ***again starting at section 30 and continuing on until section number 36) the equanimity enlightenment factor is arouse in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.***

One must realize that they must use these enlightenment factors, whenever any hindrance or distraction arises. It does not matter if the hindrance arises during one's sitting meditation or during their daily activities. These factors put the mind in balance whenever it gets bumped by a distraction.

And so, this goes on through all of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. It shows one how to use the seven enlightenment factors at all times while practicing the Mindfulness of Breathing meditation. These enlightenment factors do arise one by one as they occur and not all at the same time. Also, it shows the importance of jhanas (meditation stages) to the development of the mind and how there is great fruit and great benefit to be enjoyed when we follow these simple instructions.

> ***38] "Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a Bhikkhu contemplates mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. . .*** (Again, this repeats from section 30 to section 36) ***the equanimity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.***
>
> ***39] "Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a Bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief f6r the world. . .*** (repeat section 30 to 36) ***the equanimity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfillment in him.***
>
> ***40] "Bhikkhus, that is how the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, developed and cultivated, fulfill the Seven Enlightenment Factors.***

When the seven enlightenment factors are in perfect balance, the possibility of attaining the Supramundane Nibbana occurs. As one goes higher

and higher in the jhanas (meditation stages), the balance of the enlightenment factors becomes finer and much more subtle. This fine tuning of the mind becomes so interesting that one wants to naturally sit for much longer periods of time. *This meditation is by far the best show in town!*

Some meditators get up very early in the morning so that they have enough time to watch and learn the balance of mind and still go to work. This meditation turns out to be the most gratifying and fun exploration that anyone can ever experience, during any of one's activities.

Fulfillment of True Knowledge and Deliverance

41] "And how, Bhikkhus, do the Seven Enlightenment Factors, developed and cultivated, fulfill true knowledge and deliverance?

42] "Here, Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu develops the mindfulness enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment.

The term "supported by seclusion" means that one must gain the lowest jhana (meditation stage). As was stated above, the description of the first jhana starts with "to be secluded from sensual pleasure, then to be secluded from unwholesome states". At that time, the mind is alert and stays on the object of meditation with clarity, i.e. no distractions. If a distraction begins to arise, the mindfulness recognizes that and lets it go. Next, the description says the happiness experienced comes about by being born of seclusion. This is how one's mindfulness enlightenment factor is supported by seclusion.

Dispassion means the mind is free from attachments and clinging, i.e., not thinking or analyzing. Gaining to the fourth jhana (meditation stage) means to reach a stage of having an imperturbable mind, or a mind that has such strong equanimity that it becomes dispassionate. This is how one's mindfulness enlightenment factor is supported by dispassion.

Cessation here means the ceasing of defilements and ego-identification with what arises.

Being mindful is a term that always had a kind of slippery meaning and it is not what most people think. Its meaning is very simple and precise when it

is seen as observing mind, or attention, or alertness of attention. Being truly mindful means to see what the mind is doing at all times, then let go of the things that cause tension to arise in the head, relax and tranquilize both body and mind. It includes observing how this whole process works and allows it to be, without getting involved in the drama of things. Not getting involved with the drama of things means, to not identify with, or take personally this impersonal process or try to control the present moment.

Being mindful means to lovingly open one's mind and let go of all identification with that distraction, then relax the tension in the head and in the mind, so that one can see things clearly and calmly. Whenever one tries to resist or control what is happening in the present moment, they are at that time, fighting with the 'Dhamma' or 'Truth of the Present Moment.'

This fighting with the reality of the moment causes so much unsatisfactoriness and suffering to arise. However, when one is mindful and see clearly that this is just a phenomena arising and passing away, they can open up and accept it, without hardening their mind or resisting in any way. At this time, joyful interest is very important because when the mind has some joy in it there is no anger, jealousy, aversion, fear, or anxiety, etc. Joyful interest helps the meditator to have the proper perspective of seeing what happens in the moment impersonally. When the mind is uplifted, one sees that whatever arises is just part of a continuing process which they can learn from. Joy causes the mind to be uplifted, which is why it is an enlightenment factor and very important to one's practice. Also, when joy is in one's mind, they are pleasant to be around. Remember, the acronym that is very helpful to use is *DROPS.* It stands for Don't Resist Or Push, SMILE and Soften the mind and accept everything when it occurs, because that is the "Dhamma of the Moment".

When one continues on with their practice, their mind will eventually attain to the higher and more subtle stages of meditations (arupa jhanas). At that time, one's mind experiences the realm of 'nothingness'. This is what is called cessation. It is called this because there is nothing more to watch outside of the mind. When one experiences the realm of 'nothingness', their mind is watching nothing. But the mind is still there and the different enlightenment factors can arise along with the five aggregates which are affected by clinging. Also, some hindrances can still arise and knock one out of that exalted state. Thus, there is nothing for the mind to watch outside of itself, and yet, there is still lots to see. This is how one's mindfulness enlightenment factor is supported by cessation.

When one experiences the realm of neither-perception nor non-perception, and keeps opening and relaxing the mind, eventually they will experience the cessation of perception and feeling (Nirodha-Samapatti). During this occurrence, one will not know this turning off of consciousness because they have no perception or feeling at all! This is the only stage of meditation where this phenomena occurs. This meditation state is still mundane, it is not the Supramundane Nibbana yet. How can one know what is happening without perception or feeling? It is only when the perception and feeling come back, and if the mindfulness is sharp enough, will one sees directly, each and every link of dependent origination forwards, one by one as they occur. Even this is not the Supramundane State of Nibbana. The links are: *When ignorance arises then formations arise, when formations arise then consciousness arises, when consciousness arises mentality-materiality arises, when mentality-materiality arises then the six-fold sense base arises, when the six-fold sense base arises contact arises, when contact arises feeling arises, when feeling arises craving arises, when craving arises then clinging arises, when clinging arises then being arises, when being arises birth arises, when birth arises then old age, death arises.*

After this arising phenomenon ends, then one will experience the cessation of the dependent origination, which goes: *When old age and death cease then birth ceases, when birth ceases then being ceases, when being ceases clinging ceases, when clinging ceases then craving ceases, when craving ceases feeling ceases, when feeling ceases then contact ceases, when contact ceases the six-fold sense base ceases, when the six-fold sense base ceases then mentality-materiality ceases, when mentality-materiality ceases then consciousness ceases, when consciousness ceases then formations cease, when formations cease then ignorance ceases.*

The seeing of dependent origination both forwards and backwards leads the mind to the attainment of the 'Supramundane Nibbana'. This is where there is a major change in one's outlook. One's mind at that time, becomes dispassionate about the belief in a permanent everlasting ego or self. They see from first hand experiential knowledge, that this is just an impersonal process and there is no one controlling the way phenomena arise. These arise because conditions are right for them to arise. In Buddhist terms, this is called 'anatta' or not self nature of existence. One also realizes that no one can possibly attain sainthood by the practice of mere chanting words or phrases or suttas, or the practice of having rites and rituals done for them by someone else or by themselves. One has no more doubt about what is

the correct path that leads to the higher stages of purity of mind towards arahatship. This is how one becomes a sotapanna and attains the true path of purification. There is no other way to attain these exalted stages of being. It is only through the realization of the Noble Truths by seeing Dependent Origination. Merely seeing the three characteristics will not now, nor ever be, the experience which leads to the 'Supramundane Nibbana'. This is why all of the Buddha's appear in the world, to show the way to realizing the Noble Truths.

> ***He develops the investigation of experience enlightenment factor ..... the energy enlightenment factor..... the joy enlightenment factor..... the tranquility enlightenment factor..... the stillness enlightenment factor..... the equanimity enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, which ripens in relinquishment.***
>
> ***43] "Bhikkhus, that is how the Seven Enlightenment Factors, developed and cultivated, fulfill true knowledge and deliverance.***

Since this sutta describes the Four Foundations of Mindfulness and the Seven Enlightenment Factors, the author will conclude with the last part of the Satipathana Sutta. This is taken from the Majjhima Nikaya Sutta number 10, sections 46 to 47. It says:

> *46) "Bhikkhus, if anyone should develop these Four Foundations of Mindfulness in such a way for seven years, one of two fruits could be expected for him: either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return.*

This means attaining to the state of being an anagami or non-returner

> *"Let alone seven years, Bhikkhus. If anyone should develop these four foundations of mindfulness in such a way for six years..... for five years..... for four years..... for three years..... for two years..... for one year, one of two fruits could be expected for him: either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return.*

"Let alone one year, Bhikkhus. If anyone should develop these Four Foundations of Mindfulness in such a way for seven months..... for six months..... for five months..... for four months..... for three months..... for two months..... for one month..... for a half month ....., one of two fruits could be expected for him: either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return.

"Let alone half a month, Bhikkhus. If anyone should develop these Four Foundations of Mindfulness in such a way for seven days, one of two fruits could be expected for him: either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return.

47) "So, it was with reference to this that it was said: 'Bhikkhus, this is a 'direct path' (some translations say 'This is the only way', but that doesn't say it in the correct way a direct path or way, says this much more clearly and with less confusion) for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and grief, for the attainment of the true way, for the realization of Nibbana – namely, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness."'

That is what the Blessed One said. The Bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

This is a pretty big claim which is not made up by the author. He is only reporting what is in the suttas. When one is serious about the practice of developing their mind through the 'Tranquility' of the 'Mindfulness of Breathing', they can reach the final goal. When one reaches the first pleasant abiding (the first jhana) and if they continue on with their practice, they have the potential to attain either the stage of 'anagami' or 'arahat'. This is what the Lord Buddha said. If one is ardent, and continues without changing or stopping in their practice, then surely they will reach the goal which is described.

Again, remember that the only way to attain the Supramundane Nibbana is by realizing Dependent Origination both forwards and backwards. There is no other way because this is the seeing and realizing of the Four Noble Truths which forms the main teaching of the Lord Buddha. Great fruits and benefits befalls on those who practiced according to the instructions prescribed by the Lord Buddha.

‡

SADHU. . . . . SADHU. . . . . SADHU. . . . .

If there are any mistakes in this book, the author takes full responsibility and requests that these mistakes be pointed out to him. The sincere wish of the author is that all who practices meditation, will continue on with their efforts until they reach the highest and best state possible, that is, the attainment of Final Liberation, the Supramundane Nibbana. May all those who are sincere, know and understand the Four Noble Truths, through direct knowledge, attain the highest goal. May all practitioners of the Lord Buddha's path, realize all of the links of Dependent Origination quickly, and easily; so that their suffering will soon be overcome.

* * * * * *

The author would like to share the merit accrued by the writing of this book with his parents, relatives, helpers and all beings so that they can eventually attain the highest Bliss and be free from all suffering

May suffering ones, be suffering free
And the fear-struck, fearless be
May the grieving shed all grief
And may all beings find relief.

May all beings share this merit
that we have thus acquired
For the acquisition of all kinds
of happiness.

May beings inhabiting space and earth
Devas and nagas of mighty power
Share this merit of ours.

May they long protect the Lord
Buddha's dispensation.

Sadhu ... Sadhu... Sadhu...